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**THESIS**

**LOSING THE POPULATION; THE IMPACT OF  
COALITION POLICY AND TACTICS ON THE  
POPULATION AND THE IRAQI INSURGENCY**

by

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September 2005

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**LOSING THE POPULATION; THE IMPACT OF COALITION POLICY AND  
TACTICS ON THE POPULATION AND THE IRAQI INSURGENCY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the initial phases of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and evaluates the impact of Coalition policy and tactics on the population and the Iraqi insurgency. The Coalition has faced unanticipated challenges and violence in Iraq for three primary reasons: First, an inability to provide security for the Iraqi population, second, the rapid collapse in Iraqi confidence in the Coalition, and finally, the availability of uncontested physical and information space for opposition mobilization. These three key developments occurred due to a mismatch between Coalition policies and tactics implemented in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein. At the macro level of analysis, Coalition policies and tactics are evaluated using criteria established by a first-hand authority on Arab revolt: T.E. Lawrence, who fostered revolt in Mesopotamia in WWI. At a more specific level of analysis, the author examines, through the lens of social movement theory, the creation and growth of opposition in Sunni areas, as well as the immediate threat posed by the Sadr II Movement. This paper concludes that the rapid decline of popular support for the Coalition between April and August 2003 emanated from Coalition policies and tactics that did not emphasize security for the population. In turn, these security policies created and enabled opportunities and space in which opposition to the Coalition could mobilize.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The decision to effect regime change in Iraq was a historic turning point in U.S. military intervention. This first attempt to implement the Bush Doctrine of preemption will have lasting impacts on grand strategy for both the nation and the tactics of the U.S. military. Identifying the right lessons from this conflict is essential. The United States-led Coalition in Iraq has sacrificed troops and treasure to displace Saddam Hussein with the intent to install a peaceful, democratic government. Having won the military operations phase so convincingly, challenges in the post-conflict phase have unexpectedly placed enormous strain on the military and left victory in doubt. This paper argues that the Coalition has faced unanticipated challenges and violence in Iraq for three primary reasons: First, an inability to provide security for the Iraqi population, second, the rapid collapse in Iraqi confidence in the Coalition, and finally, the availability of uncontested physical and information space for opposition mobilization. These three key developments occurred due to a mismatch between Coalition policies and tactics implemented in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein

The author uses two analytical approaches to examine post-conflict Iraq. The first is an examination of Coalition policies and tactics using criteria for fostering revolt from a first-hand authority on Arab rebellion, T.E. Lawrence. Using Lawrence's framework, the author concludes:

- Pre-conflict, U.S. military leaders planned on leveraging Iraqi military personnel in post-conflict Iraq, but the combined impact of the lack of resources to pay the Iraqi military and the Coalition decision to disband the Iraqi military left Coalition forces unable to satisfy Lawrence's "doctrine of acreage."
- Coalition military commanders responded to increasing violence with aggressive offensive military operations, further limiting security for the Iraqi population.
- A bifurcated chain of command for security created seams in Coalition security policy and tactics; these seams grew into

unsecured areas of the country creating opportunities for opposition mobilization.

- Post-conflict emphasis on Weapons of Mass Destruction, mandated a significant percentage of intelligence resources focus solely on WMD; this placed operational and tactical commanders at a significant information disadvantage to the opposition until tactical intelligence capabilities were constituted.

The second analytical framework uses social movement theory to analyze the growth of the opposition in Iraq. Social movement theory examines how individuals and groups mobilize and sustain collective action against an existing power. In the case of Iraq, the author examines the Sadr II Movement and the Sunni-based opposition and draws the following conclusions:

- Uncontested physical and information space fueled the growth of the opposition within Iraq.
- The Sadr II Movement's emergence in Iraq was part of an organizational struggle within the Shi'a community; one that continues today.
- Despite being weakened by his failed attempt to control key sites in Najaf in August 2004, Muqtada al-Sadr is the only named Iraqi opposition to the U.S.-led Coalition; given future political opportunity the Sadr II Movement remains a threat to a future Iraqi government.
- The only unifying message for the Sunni-based opposition is anti-Coalition. The Sunni opposition has not presented a vision for a future, unoccupied Iraq.
- The different motivations and message from the Sunni and Shi'a opposition act as a self-limiter in the overall effectiveness of the opposition.

I conclude with implications and recommendations for US security strategies in Iraq.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Washington would be responsible for providing the policy—and, I hoped, sufficient resources—to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people...The plan depended on two equal imperatives—security and civil action. Only if Iraq achieved both could Iraq be transformed into an example of the power of representative government.

- GEN Tommy Franks<sup>1</sup>

In January 2004, the well respected journalist James Fallows penned a scathing article attacking the Department of Defense (DoD) for ignoring pre-war planning that predicted potential pitfalls in the aftermath of conflict in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> Fallows' article examines pre-war planning and its impact on post-conflict Iraq and asks critical questions about Coalition planning assumptions. Central to his review are two critical questions: First, did the U.S. deploy adequate troop strength for post-conflict operations, and second, did pre-war planning incorrectly assume a "liberation" effect resulting in unconditional support from the Iraqi population. Fallows concludes that the anticipated liberation effect and inadequate troop strength have caused the challenges in post-conflict Iraq. Fallows highlights the challenges in Iraq through an analysis of U.S. leaders and their decisions; the next step in an effective analysis of post-conflict Iraq is to examine the impact of these decisions on the Iraqi population. The U.S.-led Coalition faced unanticipated challenges in Iraq for three primary reasons: First, an inability to provide security for the Iraqi population, second, the rapid collapse in Iraqi confidence in Coalition forces and the Coalition Provisional Authority, and finally, the availability of uncontested physical and information space for opposition mobilization. These three key developments occurred due to a mismatch between Coalition policies and tactics implemented in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein.

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<sup>1</sup> Tommy Franks. 2004. *American soldier*. New York: Regan Books. 2004558617: 424.

<sup>2</sup> James Fallows. 2004. "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly* 293, no. 1 (Jan/Feb): 52.

This paper will examine the initial phases of the occupation and take a broader view to evaluate Coalition strategy and the impact of Coalition policies and tactics on the population and the Iraqi insurgency. For the purpose of this paper, strategy and its components are defined using a theory of strategy developed by Arthur J. Lykke.<sup>3</sup> Lykke characterizes strategy in the form of an equation:

Strategy equals **Ends** (objectives towards which one strives) plus **Ways** (courses of action) plus **Means** (instruments by which some end can be achieved).<sup>4</sup>

In the case of Iraq, the analysis will center on Coalition policies and military tactics (Ways) and the availability of adequate resources (Means) to achieve the Coalition's stated objectives (Ends)<sup>5</sup>.

Coalition policies and tactics will be evaluated using criteria established by a first-hand authority on Arab revolt: T.E. Lawrence. In the aftermath of WWI, Lawrence established criteria for the creation of a revolt in Arab lands. Central to his criteria is the role of the population. The Iraqi population's perception of the United States changed dramatically during the period April 2003 to March 2005. In the month immediately following Operation Iraqi Freedom, Americans were largely received as liberators, by May 2004 90% of the population viewed Americans as occupiers.<sup>6</sup> Included in the analysis of the Iraqi population will be the expansion of Iraqi insurgent groups to determine if relationships exist between U.S. tactics and policies and the creation and growth of these groups.<sup>7</sup> The framework for this analysis is social movement theory.

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur F Lykke Jr. 1997. "Defining Military Strategy." *Military Review*, (January 1), 183-186.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For clarification, examples of Coalition policies are disbanding the Iraqi Armed Forces or de-Ba'athification. Examples of military tactics in post-conflict Iraq include the use of offensive operations, such as raids and sweeps.

<sup>6</sup> Jim Lobe. 2004. "U.S.: Army Brass Restrained as Bush Pledges 'Freedom' for Iraqis." *Global Information Network* (May 25) : 1.

<sup>7</sup> The author previously published articles on the growth of the Sunni-based insurgency and the Sadr Movement in the Center for Contemporary Conflict. These articles are available at <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/May/haughSunniMay05.asp> and <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/May/haughShiiteMay05.asp>

## **A. CHANGING IRAQI PERCEPTIONS**

Chapter II will use polling data to evaluate the perceptions of the Iraqi population in post-conflict Iraq.<sup>8</sup> This analysis will center on four key areas:

- Priorities of the Iraqi population
- Confidence in Coalition Forces
- Confidence in the Coalition Provisional Authority, and
- Confidence in Iraqi institutions

The changing views of the population provide the basis for evaluation of Coalition policies and tactics.

Analysis of polling data available from August 2003 – March 2005 provides the following conclusions:

- From the outset of polling in Iraq in August 2003, the highest priority for the Iraqi population has been regaining public security.
- Over the life of the occupation, the Iraqi population has expressed little confidence in Coalition Forces. Throughout August 2003 – March 2005, a minimum of 48% of the population surveyed, said they “no confidence at all” in Coalition Forces.
- The two peaks of Iraqi confidence in Coalition Forces occurred in February 2004 and January 2005 at just under 25% of the population expressing confidence in Coalition Forces. The drop following the February 2004 peak likely occurred due to standoffs with opposition in Fallujah and Najaf in April 2004. The January 2005 peak occurred coincident with Iraqi national elections.

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<sup>8</sup> The polling data used is from two sources. Polling data from Oxford Research International covers the period August 2003-June 2004. These polls were conducted using the same methodology and questions for all three polls. Polling data from the period October 2004 – March 2005 comes from the Department of State’s Office of Research.

- The Iraqi population's views and confidence with the Coalition Provisional Authority follow a very similar path as that of Coalition forces.
- In contrast to the very steady vote of no confidence of the Coalition, the Iraqi population's views toward the new Iraqi Army and Police improved steadily since polling began in August 2003.

## **B. ANALYSIS OF COALITION POLICIES AND TACTICS**

Chapter III examines Coalition policies and tactics. How the United States “lost” the Iraqi population during this phase will not be determined by examining Coalition policies, Coalition force tactics or insurgent tactics in isolation alone. The interaction between these three variables and the resulting unintended consequences must be analyzed.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this paper is not to assess blame, but rather to identify the impacts of U.S. tactics and policies for consideration in future conflicts. My research will evaluate the change in Iraqi public perception over time in relation to U.S. Central Command tactics, Coalition Provisional Authority policy decisions, and coalition actions that influenced the population and the Iraqi insurgency. The intent of the research is to separate popular generalizations from reality so that lessons can be learned. As a basis for evaluating the likelihood of rebellion in an occupied Islamic nation, the author will use criteria established by T.E. Lawrence to evaluate the likelihood of rebellion in post-conflict Iraq.

At the heart of this analysis is a detailed timeline of U.S. actions<sup>10</sup>. These actions include key Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) policies, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) tactics, U.S. reconstruction expenditures, and statements made by senior U.S. political and military leaders. In addition to the

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Jervis. 1997. *System Effects : Complexity in Political and Social Life*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press., (DLC) 97001108.

<sup>10</sup> This timeline incorporates data from the following sources: [www.centcom.mil](http://www.centcom.mil), [www.iraqbodycount.net](http://www.iraqbodycount.net), the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Brookings Iraq Index.

timeline development, the author incorporates interviews, as well as personal research and experience conducted during visits to Iraq in 2003 and 2004.

The research and analysis of U.S. actions in the diplomatic arena will center on the decisions and policies of the Coalition Provisional Authority. The analysis of CPA policies<sup>11</sup> will focus on a series of critical issues, including establishment of CPA, looting, de-Ba'athification, disbanding the Iraqi Army, and election policies. While much has been written of the results of these decisions, such as de-Ba'athification, additional work is needed to understand the implications of each of these decisions within the context of other U.S. actions. Additionally, evaluating when and how these critical CPA decisions were made and implemented adds to the understanding of the impact on other U.S. actions and the subsequent impacts on the Iraqi population. CPA policies and directives are publicly available on the CPA website.<sup>12</sup> Public statements by senior U.S. officials detail the rationalization for these decisions and first hand accounts by CPA officials that participated in the decision making process or implementation of these decisions are readily available.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, evaluation of the military actions in Iraq will begin with the research and analysis of USCENTCOM operational assumptions prior to executing Operation Iraqi Freedom. The intent is to evaluate public statements, USCENTCOM press briefings, and senior leadership memoirs for U.S. planning assumptions in the areas of de-Ba'athification, use of the remnants of the Iraqi Army or police as a stabilization force, and anticipation of post-conflict violence. This review will center on the validity of the primary criticism of USCENTCOM; troop strength. Analysis of post-conflict military actions will also examine

<sup>11</sup> The Coalition Provisional Authority was established on May 1, 2003 by the order of the President. A predecessor organization, known as the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs was incorporated into the CPA. The analysis of CPA will include ORHA decisions.

<sup>12</sup> Cpa-iraq.org

<sup>13</sup> James Fallows' article is representative of many critiques of the CPA-led, post-war period. These analyses include: Diamond, Larry. 2004. "What Went Wrong in Iraq;" *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 5 (September/October): 34; Feldman, Noah. 2004. *What we Owe Iraq: War and the Ethics of Nation Building*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004016041; and Hoffman, Bruce. "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," June 2004. Available from [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2005/RAND\\_OP127.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf), [November 2004].

relationships between Coalition tactics, intelligence capabilities, and security operations for the Iraqi populace.

Particular emphasis of U.S. actions will center on the immediate aftermath of the war. The period beginning with the fall of Baghdad (April 9, 2003) and ending with the bombing of the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf (August 2003). This period set the objectives and tone of the Coalition Provisional Authority's direction and established the basis for Coalition interaction with the Iraqi population.

### **C. IMPACTS OF COALITION POLICIES AND TACTICS ON THE INSURGENCY**

Chapters IV and V examine the growth of opposition to the U.S.-led Coalition. Following the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, a number of groups mobilized support to counter the U.S.-led Coalition. These groups countered the Coalition and the emerging Iraqi government through collective actions, both violent and non-violent. Theories for analyzing contentious collective action have evolved, with inquiry varied by the unit of analysis. Three primary analytical frameworks have emerged in the study of contentious collective actions. Structural theories, which focus on large unit analysis at the international or national level; rational choice theory, which attempts to explain individual actions and decisions; and an emerging field of study at the group level, known as social movement theory. While social movement theory centers on the group level, a growing body of social movement research incorporates how groups mobilize individuals, in the form of recruitment and socialization, to engage in collective action.

Social movement theory provides a balanced middle ground between structural and rational choice schools of thought and examines how individuals and groups mobilize and sustain collective action against an existing power. The study of social movements has created a broad analytical framework to examine the emergence and development of social movements. Using social movement

theory as the methodology for analysis, the author evaluates the Sunni-based insurgency and the Sadr II Movement using the four variables of:

- Political Opportunity. Political opportunity examines the interaction between an emerging movement and existing political structures, examples include: regime change, abandonment of a nation by a foreign power, domestic policy shifts, or legal changes.
- Mobilization Structures. Mobilizing structures are the engine of a social movement, acting as the informal and formal vehicles, through which groups mobilize and engage in collective action.<sup>14</sup>
- Frames and Framing Processes. Frames and framing processes are simple but effective ways to define the movement and the problem being addressed in a way that is persuasive to a large audience.
- Repertoires of Action. The actions, both violent and non-violent, used by a movement in pursuit of common interests represent the repertoires.

Evaluating the growth and actions of the opposition in the context of social movement theory enables the author to examine the import and impact of specific Coalition tactics and policies on the growth of the insurgency. While Chapter III emphasized Coalition policies and tactics during the initial post-conflict period, Chapters IV and V extend this evaluation to spring 2005.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS**

Chapter VI concludes the thesis with an analysis of lessons learned, implications for the current Iraqi conflict, and finally implications for future conflict.

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<sup>14</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald. "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes-toward a Synthetic Comparative Perspective on Social Movements." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 1-20. New York: Cambridge University Press, pg. 3.

The author argues that the Coalition has faced unanticipated challenges and violence in Iraq for three primary reasons: First, an inability to provide security for the Iraqi population, second, the rapid collapse in Iraqi confidence in the Coalition, and finally, the availability of uncontested physical and information space for opposition mobilization. These three key developments occurred due to a mismatch between Coalition policies and tactics implemented in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein. This paper concludes that the rapid decline of popular support for the Coalition between April and August 2003 emanated from Coalition policies and tactics that did not emphasize security for the population. In turn, these security policies created and enabled opportunities and space in which opposition to the Coalition could mobilize.

## II. CHANGING IRAQI PERCEPTIONS OVER TIME

My belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators.

- Vice President Cheney, March 16, 2003<sup>15</sup>

The expectation that the Iraqi people would welcome Coalition forces as liberators was assumed by U.S. senior leaders. The initial images of welcoming, liberated Iraqi citizens reinforced this notion. Quickly the excitement of the Coalition's dethroning of Saddam Hussein expired and the population's view of liberating Coalition forces changed rapidly. This chapter will examine the changing view of the Iraqi population toward Coalition forces, the Coalition Provisional Authority, and Iraqi institutions, while also identifying the population's priorities at different stages of the occupation.

Perhaps most significant to the success of Coalition forces in post-conflict Iraq was the need for continued confidence of the Iraqi people. The role and importance of popular support at the outset of the occupation cannot be overstated. In their study of British "Small Wars Doctrine" executed in successful counterinsurgencies in Kenya, Cyprus, and Malaya, Bruce Hoffman and Jessica Yaw identified the significance of popular support:

If the population is supportive, the government has greater leeway in using restrictive measures without fear of alienating the citizenry. The government can also reap great dividends from actively defending the population against insurgent reprisals in the form of increased civilian cooperation and the attendant provision of enhanced intelligence.<sup>16</sup>

The opposition need receive only passive support from the population. T.E. Lawrence in his analysis of the Arab revolt against the Turks in WWI identified the role of the population in fostering rebellion, "A friendly population, not actively

<sup>15</sup> Meet the Press with Tim Russert. Transcript for sept. 14, 2003 GUEST: Dick cheney, vice president 2004. Internet on-line. Available from <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/3080244/>, [January 2005].

<sup>16</sup> Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw. 1991. *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: The Development of Britain's "Small Wars" Doctrine During the 1950s*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the [occupier].”<sup>17</sup> As such, opposition forces need only keep the population on the side lines, while Coalition forces need the population to take action to pinpoint the opposition. Without the confidence of the population, the task for Coalition and emerging Iraqi forces became even more challenging.

#### A. IRAQI POPULATION’S PRIORITIES

Without a doubt, one issue dominated the lives of Iraqis: public security. In August 2003, Oxford Research International completed the first comprehensive, scientific poll of Iraq. This poll serves as a baseline for establishing the priorities of the population. The results of the first poll are shown below as Table 1. Unequivocally, “regaining public security” was the dominant issue for the vast majority of Iraqis.

August 2003: Please tell me your priorities for the next 12 months?			
	First priority	Second priority	Third priority
Regaining public security	67.3%	10.3%	10.3%
Rebuild infrastructure	8.7%	32.4%	32.4%
Following religious ideals	5.0%	6.1%	6.1%
Iraqi self-governance	4.6%	9.1	9.1
Reviving economy	4.1%	13.6%	13.6%
Ensure that population can earn a decent living	3.8%	15.0%	20.0%

Table 1. Iraqi population’s priorities – August 2003<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> T. E. Lawrence. 1968. *Evolution of a Revolt; Early Post-War Writings of T. E. Lawrence*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press: 119.

<sup>18</sup>Oxford Research International, August 2003, “National Survey of Iraq.” Available from: <http://www.oxfordresearch.com/Iraq%20Autumn%202003%20Frequency%20Tables.PDF>, [July 2005].

Security remained the priority for the remainder of CPA's reign. Oxford Research completed three polls during the initial Coalition occupation. In addition to the original August 2003 poll, two other polls were conducted in February 2004 and June 2004. These polls provide a snapshot of the Iraqi population's priorities during the CPA's brief existence. Table 2 below identifies the top two issues facing Iraqis during the August 2003 – June 2004 timeframe.

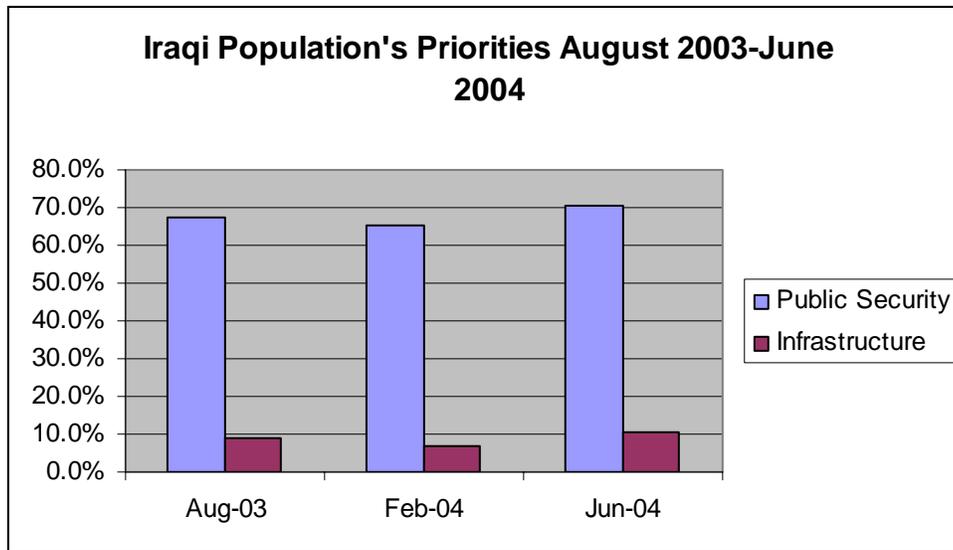


Table 2. Iraqi population's priorities – August 2003 – June 2004<sup>19</sup>

Public security remained the highest priority throughout the Coalition Provisional Authority's reign, which ended in June 2004. In June 2004, the Iraqi Interim Government replaced the Coalition Provisional Authority as the governing body in Iraq. Polling conducted in late 2004 and early 2005 by the Department of State, identified changing regional landscape in priorities. While security remained the highest priority nationwide, areas of the country were ready to focus on other issues. Table 3 below identifies priorities by region. Areas, such as the Kurdish North and Tikrit/Baquba began to identify infrastructure is the

<sup>19</sup>Oxford Research International, August 2003, "National Survey of Iraq." Available from: <http://www.oxfordresearch.com/Iraq%20Autumn%202003%20Frequency%20Tables.PDF>, [July 2005], Oxford Research International, February 2004, "National Survey of Iraq." Available from: <http://www.oxfordresearch.com/Iraq%20February%202004%20Frequency%20Tables.PDF>, [July 2005], and Oxford Research International, June 2004, National Survey of Iraq. Available from: <http://www.oxfordresearch.com/Iraq%20June%202004%20Frequency%20Tables.PDF>, [July 2005].

most urgent issue. This improved security picture perceived by some Iraqis shifted in the up tick of violence following the Iraqi national elections in January 2005. By March, security was again the highest priority in all regions except the Kurdish North.

In your opinion, what is the most urgent issue facing your country currently? (% BY REGION)																		
	Baghdad			Kurdish			Kirkuk			Tikrit-Baquba			Mid-Euphrates			South		
	Dec	Jan	Mar	Dec	Jan	Mar	Dec	Jan	Mar	Dec	Jan	Mar	Dec	Jan	Mar	Dec	Jan	Mar
Overall security of country	50	38	<b>62</b>	3	5	<b>3</b>	45	50	<b>37</b>	22	26	<b>41</b>	41	41	<b>56</b>	33	33	<b>41</b>
Infrastructure such as electricity, gas, energy and water	19	33	<b>14</b>	21	27	<b>30</b>	13	29	<b>33</b>	51	55	<b>26</b>	34	34	<b>18</b>	39	39	<b>25</b>
Economic issues, unemployment, poverty	11	6	<b>8</b>	23	20	<b>24</b>	18	10	<b>15</b>	16	8	<b>18</b>	12	16	<b>16</b>	20	15	<b>24</b>
Presence of Multinational Forces	6	6	<b>2</b>	--	--	<b>1</b>	11	1	<b>1</b>	4	7	<b>4</b>	2	1	<b>--</b>	1	2	<b>1</b>
Housing crisis	4	4	<b>3</b>	4	3	<b>11</b>	2	--	<b>4</b>	2	--	<b>4</b>	2	1	<b>2</b>	2	1	<b>2</b>
Federalism	--	--	<b>--</b>	33	22	<b>13</b>	--	--	<b>1</b>	--	--	<b>--</b>	--	--	<b>--</b>	--	--	<b>--</b>
Office of Research surveys December 12-26, 2004; January 15-26 and March 15-22, 2005																		

Table 3. Iraqi population's priorities by region – December 2004- March 2005<sup>20</sup>

In summary, the Iraqi population's priorities centered around one issue: security. Table 4 summarizes the top two priorities of the Iraqi population from August 2003 to March 2005.

<sup>20</sup>All responses that tallied lower than 9% throughout the period were removed by the author for clarity. Department of State, Office of Research, *Iraqis Sense Improved Security*, Washington D.C., April, 18, 2005: 10.

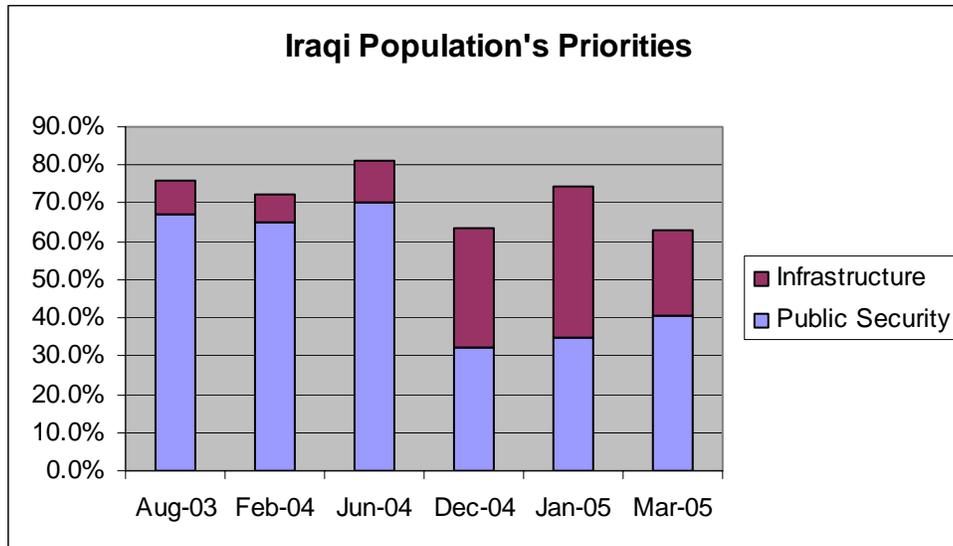


Figure 1. Summary of Iraqi Population's Priorities – August 2003 – March 2005

In every poll but the month of the Iraqi elections (January 2005), security was the highest priority for the Iraqi population. The Iraqi population's concern over security greatly impacted its perception of Coalition forces.

## B. IRAQI POPULATION'S PERCEPTIONS OF COALITION FORCES

The persistence of violence and the Iraqi population's concern with public security are tightly linked to the Iraqi populace's confidence in Coalition forces. As Figure 2 shows, by August 2003, over 78% of the population expressed either "not very much" or "no confidence" in Coalition forces. This level of confidence remained constant throughout the period of shared U.S/British rule.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> By United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483, the U.S. and Great Britain were given the responsibilities of governing Iraq until such time as an Iraqi government could be installed. This period ran from May 2003-June 2004, ending with the installation of the Iraqi Interim Government on 28 June 2004.

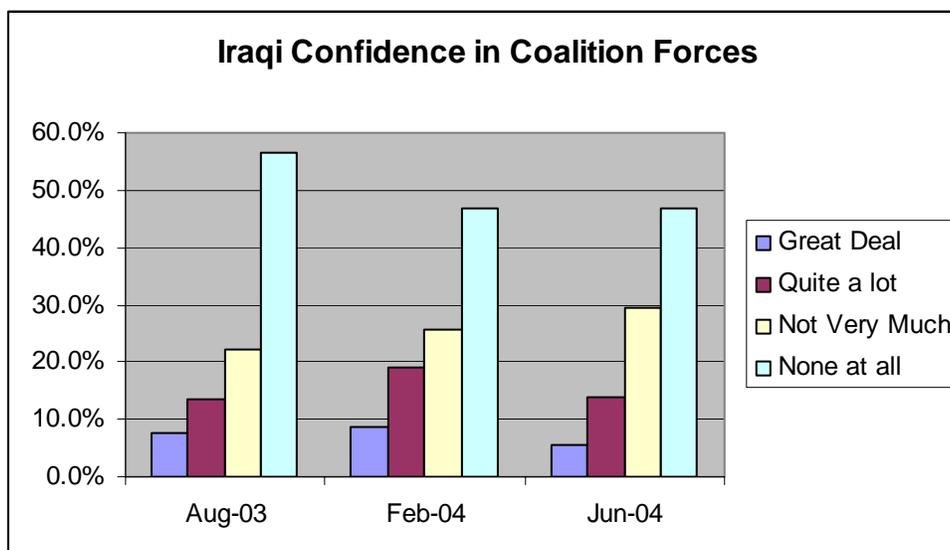


Figure 2. Iraqi Confidence in Coalition Forces Aug 2003 – June 2004<sup>22</sup>

Following the transition to Iraqi Government rule, Iraqis' lack of confidence in Coalition forces remained relatively constant. Table 6 identifies by region the Iraqi population's confidence in Coalition forces. Only January 2005 (the time of the Iraqi national elections) showed potential for improving confidence in Coalition forces. By March 2005, the negative view of the population toward Coalition forces returned to pre-election levels.

Table A-21. How much confidence do you have in the following to improve the situation in Iraq? Coalition/Multinational forces (% BY REGION)																								
	Baghdad				Kurdish				Kirkuk				Tikrit / Baquba				Mid-Euphrates				South			
	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar
Great deal	8	2	13	<b>5</b>	45	42	33	<b>41</b>	8	11	8	<b>25</b>	2	--	2	<b>2</b>	5	4	8	<b>2</b>	4	5	13	<b>9</b>
Fair amount	5	6	11	<b>8</b>	27	40	36	<b>29</b>	6	8	14	<b>10</b>	2	4	8	<b>4</b>	7	6	7	<b>8</b>	4	6	15	<b>11</b>
Not very much	5	11	14	<b>19</b>	6	6	16	<b>15</b>	9	4	18	<b>15</b>	3	11	27	<b>24</b>	6	6	8	<b>10</b>	3	10	30	<b>14</b>
None at all	68	73	48	<b>64</b>	3	6	5	<b>10</b>	66	68	58	<b>38</b>	85	79	60	<b>66</b>	79	83	75	<b>78</b>	81	74	39	<b>59</b>
Don't know	15	8	14	<b>4</b>	20	6	11	<b>5</b>	12	9	2	<b>12</b>	8	5	3	<b>4</b>	4	2	3	<b>3</b>	8	5	2	<b>7</b>

Office of Research surveys October 15-25, December 12-26, 2004, January 15-26 and March 15-22, 2005

Table 4. Iraqi Confidence in Coalition Forces October 2004 – March 2005<sup>23</sup>

Over the life of the occupation, the Iraqi population has expressed little confidence in Coalition Forces. Throughout August 2003 – March 2005, a

<sup>22</sup> Oxford Research International.

<sup>23</sup> Department of State, Office of Research, *Iraqis Sense Improved Security*, Washington D.C., April, 18, 2005: 10.

minimum of 48% of the population surveyed, said they “no confidence at all” in Coalition Forces. Figure 3 shows the Iraqi’s perceptions of Coalition forces throughout the period under study.

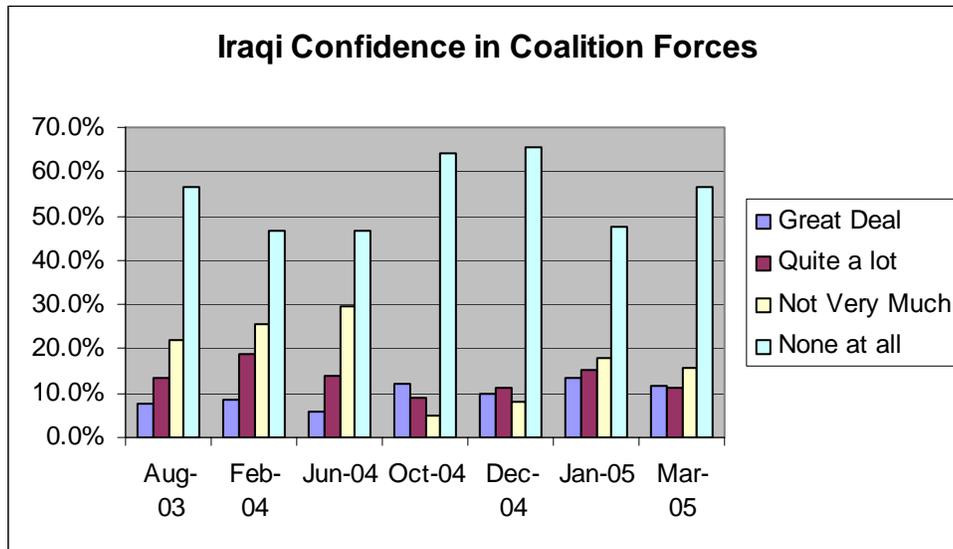


Figure 3. Iraqi Confidence in Coalition Forces – August 2003 – March 2005

In summary, only on two occasions during the occupation did more than 25% of the population express either a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the Coalition. Figure 4 compares the number of Iraqis that expressed confidence<sup>24</sup> in the Coalition vs. those Iraqis that had no confidence at all.

<sup>24</sup> The author has identified confidence as members of the population answering either a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in Coalition Forces.

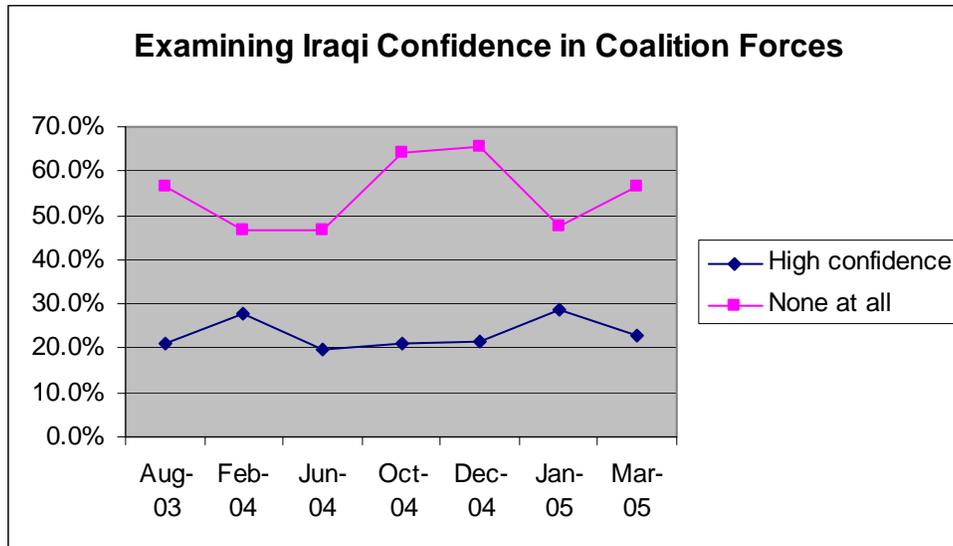


Figure 4. Comparison of Iraqi Confidence in Coalition Forces<sup>25</sup>

The two peaks of Iraqi confidence in Coalition Forces occurred in February 2004 and January 2005 at just under 25% of the population expressing confidence in Coalition Forces. The drop following the February 2004 peak likely occurred due to standoffs with opposition in Fallujah and Najaf in April 2004. The January 2005 peak occurred coincident with Iraqi national elections.

**C. IRAQI POPULATION’S PERCEPTIONS OF THE COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY**

The Iraqi population’s views and confidence with the Coalition Provisional Authority follow a very similar path as that of Coalition forces.

<sup>25</sup> Oxford Research International and Department of State Office of Research.

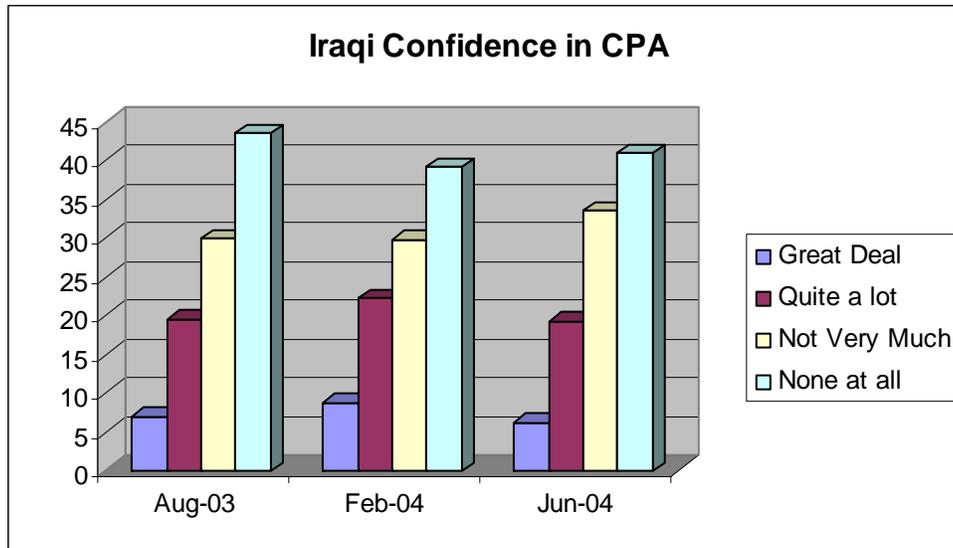


Figure 5. Iraqi Confidence in the Coalition Provisional Authority Aug 2003 – June 2004<sup>26</sup>

The negative view of the Iraqi population toward all facets of the Coalition, both Coalition forces and the Coalition Provisional Authority did not extend to the Iraqi institutions re-established by the Coalition.

#### D. IRAQI POPULATION'S PERCEPTIONS OF IRAQI SECURITY AND POLICE FORCES

In contrast to the very steady vote of no confidence of the Coalition, the Iraqi population's views toward the new Iraqi Army and Police improved steadily since polling began in August 2003. Figure 6 shows the steady improvement in confidence in the reconstituted Iraqi Security Forces.

<sup>26</sup> Oxford Research International.

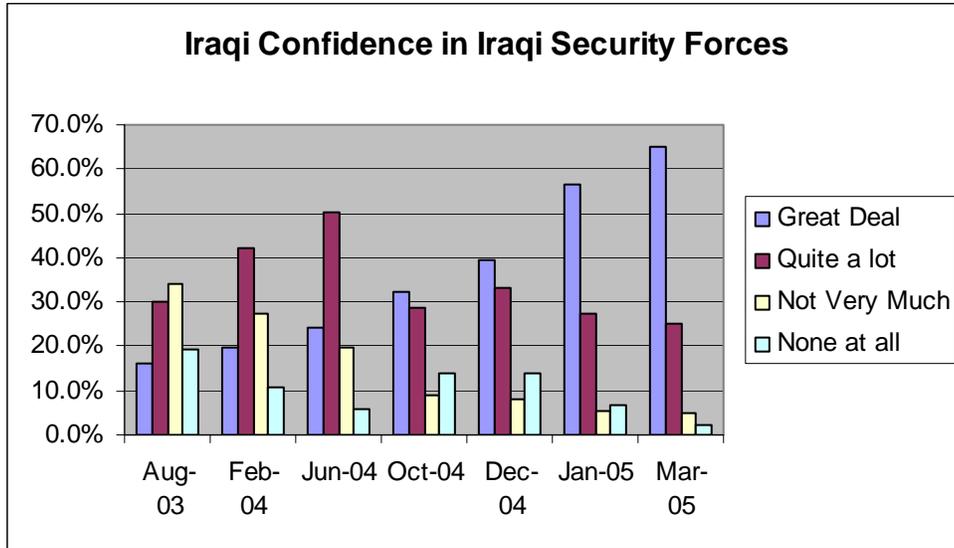


Figure 6. Iraqi Confidence in Iraqi Security Forces Aug 2003 – March 2005<sup>27</sup>

Iraqi confidence in the new Iraq police followed a similar, positive path. Figure 7 identifies the growing confidence in the Iraqi police force.

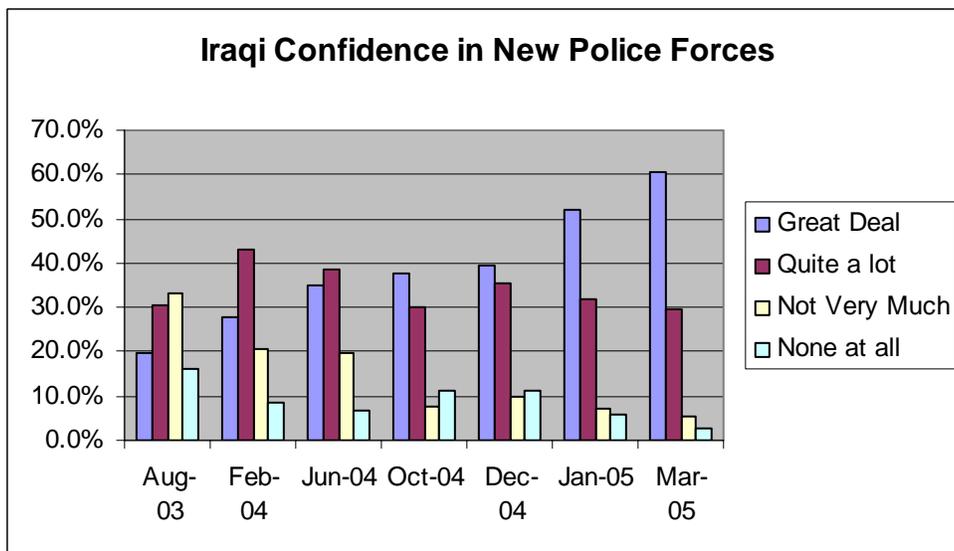


Figure 7. Iraqi Confidence in Iraqi Police Forces Aug 2003 – March 2005<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Oxford Research International and Department of State, Office of Research.

<sup>28</sup> Oxford Research International and Department of State, Office of Research.

Almost paradoxically, the Iraqi population increased its support of the Iraqi security organizations, even as violence increased during the same period. While confidence in Iraqi security forces grew, the confidence in their trainers, Coalition forces, continued to wane.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

The populace has expressed little confidence in the Coalition since polling began in August 2003. The peak of Iraqi confidence in the Coalition occurred in January 2005 when, for the only time during the occupation, “regaining public security” was not the #1 priority for the Iraqi populace.<sup>29</sup> In hearings before Congress in March 2005, Andrew Krepinevich assessed the reasons for low popular support of Coalition efforts:

Developing a secure environment in which reconstruction can take place takes time. The reason for this is that the population’s support is conditional on the government’s ability to demonstrate convincingly that it has both the means and the will to persevere. This critical factor has been lacking in the United States’ strategy for dealing with the insurgents. Despite professions that America will “stay the course” in Iraq, the population has, in fact, been subjected to a series of course changes by the US Government that provide a very weak foundation...<sup>30</sup>

The roots of this distrust began in the initial stages of the occupation immediately following the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. The initial Coalition policies impacted not only the perceptions of the Iraqi populace toward the Coalition, but on the establishment and growth of the nascent insurgency.

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<sup>29</sup> Department of State, Office of Research, pg. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Krepinevich, “Are we winning in Iraq?,” testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, 17 March 2005, Washington D.C.

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### III. ANALYSIS OF U.S. POLICIES AND TACTICS IN IRAQ

#### A. ORHA

History will credit or blame Ambassador Bremer for the United States' performance in post-conflict Iraq, but the import of the ill-fated, short life of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) cannot be overstated. Originally established as a transitional interim administration to bridge the gap between the ouster of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of an Iraqi government, ORHA faced enormous obstacles that proved insurmountable. Due to its rapid disestablishment and absorption into CPA, little documentation exists on ORHA; yet it is clear the organization was plagued by a late start to planning, faulty assumptions, and a lack of resources.

Unfortunately for the Coalition, these initial organizational challenges occurred at the most critical time for establishing trust and confidence with the Iraqi population. ORHA existed from January 2003 to May 10, 2003 and was led by LTG (ret.) Jay Garner. LTG (ret.) Garner was dealt a difficult hand. ORHA's hasty establishment and optimistic operational assumptions left Garner with a pickup team from disparate agencies, short on both experience and funding. Senior members of the Bush Administration believed that following an end to major ground operations in May 2003, Iraq would return to a complex yet stable, operating environment. Vice President Dick Cheney noted on several occasions that the United States would be "greeted as liberators."<sup>31</sup> In his testimony to Congress in March 2003, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz concurred, adding "Iraq [will be able to] finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon."<sup>32</sup> As the ORHA soon discovered, however, these were false expectations.

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<sup>31</sup> D. Milbank, & Wright, R. (2004). *Off the Mark on Cost of War, Reception by Iraqis*. Available online from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A6338-2004Mar18?language=printer>, [September 2004].

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

## 1. Political/Military Objectives - Operation Iraqi Freedom

U.S. Central Command initiated Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) on March 19, 2003 to achieve the following, Presidential-directed, objectives:<sup>33</sup>

1. A stable Iraq, with its territorial integrity intact and a broad-based government that renounces WMD development and use, and no longer supports terrorism or threatens its neighbors.
2. Success in Iraq leveraged to convince or compel other countries to cease support to terrorists and to deny them access to WMD.
3. Destabilize, isolate, and overthrow the Iraqi regime and provide support to a new, broad-based government.
4. Destroy Iraqi WMD capability and infrastructure.
5. Protect allies and supporters from Iraqi threats and attacks.
6. Destroy terrorist networks in Iraq. Gather intelligence on global terrorism; detain terrorists and war criminals, and free individuals unjustly detained under the Iraqi regime.

To implement these political objectives, the US Central Commander, GEN Franks, established the following military objectives:<sup>34</sup>

1. Defeat or compel capitulation of Iraqi forces.
2. Neutralize regime leadership.
3. Neutralize Iraqi TBM / WMD delivery systems.
4. Control WMD infrastructure.
5. Ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq.
6. Deploy and posture CFC forces for post-hostility operations, initiating humanitarian assistance operations for the Iraqi people, within capabilities.
7. Set military conditions for provisional/permanent government to assume power.
8. Maintain international and regional support.
9. Neutralize Iraqi regime's C2 & security forces.
10. Gain and maintain air, maritime and space supremacy.

President Bush ordered GEN Franks to begin military operations on March 19, 2003.

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<sup>33</sup> Moseley, T. Michael. *Operation Iraqi Freedom: By the Numbers*. Shaw Air Force Base, SC: Combined Forces Air Component, Assessment and Analysis Division, 2003, pg. 4. Available online from: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/Emergency\\_Wartime\\_Supp\\_Daniels\\_Ltr.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/Emergency_Wartime_Supp_Daniels_Ltr.pdf), [August 2004].

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, pg. 4.

## **2. Military Operations – March 20, 2003 – April 9, 2003**

The U.S. led Coalition began the sprint to Baghdad on March 19, 2003 and ended April 9, 2003 with Coalition troops entering Baghdad. Military operations continued throughout April and President Bush declared an end to combat hostilities on May 1, 2003. The speed and efficiency of the victory over the Iraqi military surprised even U.S. forces. Military historian John Keegan notes: “The war was not only successful but peremptorily short, lasting only twenty-one days, from 20 March to 9 April. Campaigns so brief are rare, a lightning campaign so complete in its results almost unprecedented.”<sup>35</sup> As of 9 April, the only two military objectives yet unmet were: posturing for post-hostility operations and setting the military conditions for provisional/permanent government to assume power.

## **3. Military Humanitarian Assistance**

During the build-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom, USCENTCOM military planners emphasized three main areas for immediate post-conflict action:

1. Minimize the number of displaced persons
2. Provide basic necessities (food, water, medicine) to the Iraqi people
3. Preserve the oil fields as the future wealth of the Iraqi people<sup>36</sup>

In each of these areas, the Coalition performed well. Largely based on the tactics employed and the swift conclusion of the war, no refugee crisis ensued. Basic services were largely intact at pre-war levels and the Iraqi oil fields were seized undamaged by Coalition forces. While the rapid conclusion of the war minimized the chances of a humanitarian crisis, the abridged conflict placed an additional strain on post-conflict security.

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<sup>35</sup> Keegan, John, 2004. *The Iraq War*. New York: A.A. Knopf. (DLC) 13533757; pg. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Author's notes, JTF-IV planning conference, MacDill AFB, FL, January 2003.

Coalition military leaders were faced with difficult decisions. As the security apparatus of the former regime disappeared, the Coalition was faced with a choice between eliminating the last remnants of the regime and providing security for Iraqi institutions and the population. LTG William Wallace, Commander of U.S. Army 5<sup>th</sup> Corps in Baghdad, described the situation:

Well, I don't think it was as much an issue of the number of troops as the fact that we were still fighting our ass off as we went into Baghdad. And our first responsibility was to defeat the enemy forces, both paramilitary and regular army. And as their resistance dissipated, as we were able to stabilize the military situation, then we were able to get around to point security and area security of the ministries and museums and places such as that.<sup>37</sup>

Looters filled the breach between the disappearing Iraqi police force and the emergence of Coalition security; John Keegan describes the results:

Looters appeared in thousands and began to pillage. At first their targets were the office buildings of the regime in the government quarter of Baghdad. Then the looters turned to nongovernmental facilities, including hospitals and schools...After a few chaotic weeks there was little left to steal, householders in the richer quarters were defending their properties and the American troops had established rough-and-ready order in the streets.<sup>38</sup>

While the streets of Baghdad took several weeks to calm, other areas of the country did not have widespread looting.

Areas, such as Mosul and Basrah, were able to much more rapidly prepare for post-Saddam existence. In fact, many important positive steps occurred in Iraq during the month after the fall of Baghdad. In the north, Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, held elections for a city council and a mayor, oil production reached 125,000 barrels a day, the first commercial airliner arrived in Iraq, and schools across Iraq opened. The figure below identifies a number of key events in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

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<sup>37</sup> Wallace, William. *Fifth Corps Commander Live Briefing from Baghdad*, May 7, 2003, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030507-0157.html>, [April 2005].

<sup>38</sup> Keegan, pg. 206.

## Coalition Progress in Iraq - May 2003

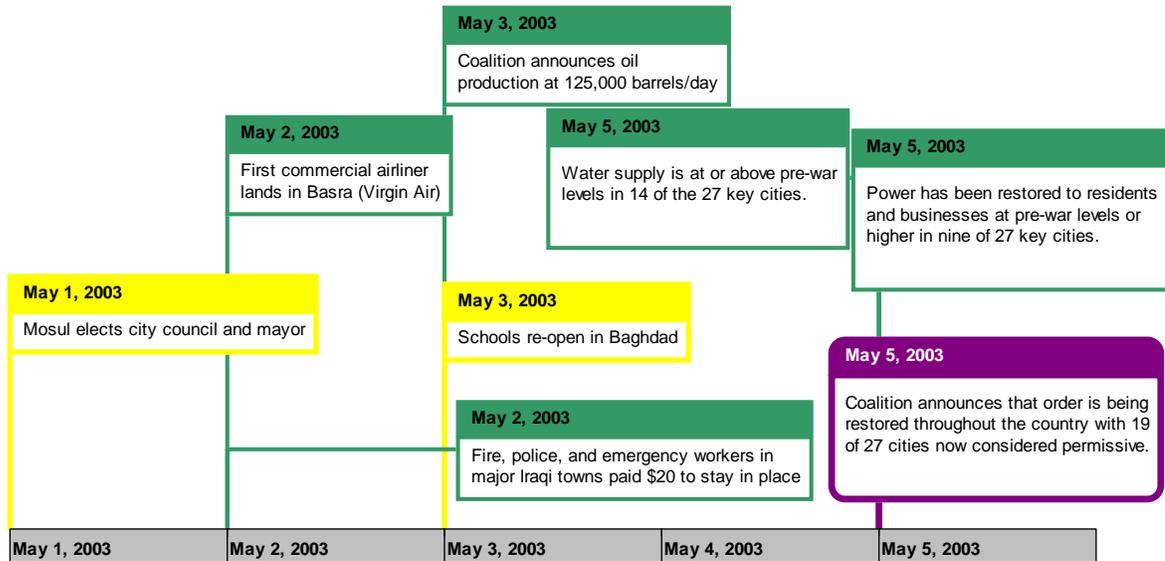


Figure 8. Coalition Progress in Iraq early May 2003

With the notable exception of security, many of the short term key indicators were moving in the right direction for the Coalition, the USCENTCOM organization tasked with leading post-conflict Iraq should have been poised for success. Military humanitarian assistance was largely intended as a stopgap measure. Under USCENTCOM the organization tasked with long term reconstruction and humanitarian assistance was ORHA.

#### 4. Key Events during the ORHA Phase

On January 20, 2003, President Bush signed National Security Policy Directive (NSPD) 24, establishing the Department of Defense (DoD) as the lead

for post-conflict administration.<sup>39</sup> As Secretary Rumsfeld's choice to lead this effort, LTG Garner (ret.), brought experience in stability operations, having led forces in both Northern Iraq (after Desert Storm) as well as Bosnia. He established three pillars for ORHA: 1. Humanitarian assistance; 2. Reconstruction, and 3. Civil administration.<sup>40</sup> ORHA's preparations were hasty and abridged. ORHA's first meeting that included all of the organization's leadership occurred in late February 2003, just one month prior to CENTCOM's execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Less than two months from the organization's inception, ORHA deployed to Kuwait on March 16, 2003 to prepare to lead the post-conflict phase of operations.

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<sup>39</sup> See Woodward, Bob, 2004. *Plan of attack*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 2004351204 for a description of the process and relationship between DoD and the Department of State leading up to the war. Woodward describes a scenario different than most, that DoD and DoS agreed on DoD's role as lead for post-conflict Iraq, but not on firing of key DoS employees involved in the Future of Iraq Project.

<sup>40</sup> George Packer. 2003. "War After the War Letter from Baghdad." *The New Yorker* (Nov 24): 059.

## ORHA - Key Events Jan - May 2003

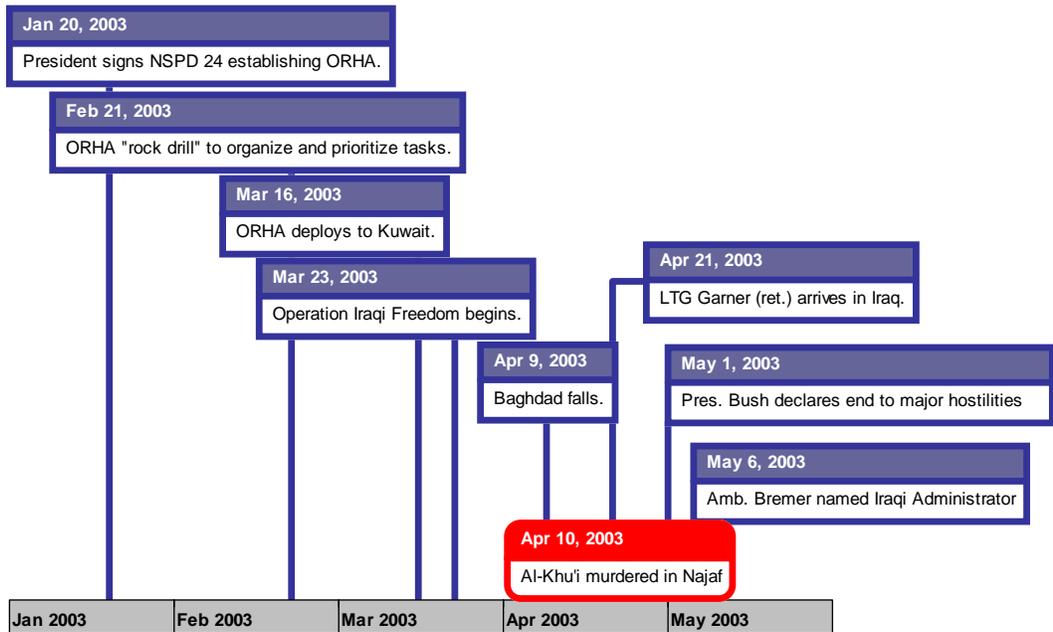


Figure 9. ORHA Key Events<sup>41</sup>

By the time, Garner and his staff arrived in Baghdad on 21 April 2003, Baghdad had fallen and the humanitarian crisis that ORHA prepared for never materialized. In a special report analyzing post-conflict reconstruction, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) said: "The most remarkable aspect of pre-occupation economic planning was its focus on a single contingency: humanitarian disaster."<sup>42</sup> Even before ORHA arrived, the dye had been cast against the organization. The preconditions placed on the organization, in the form of the presumed operating environment, were quickly dispelled as looting ravaged the country and shattered any perception of Coalition control. Two other

<sup>41</sup> Compiled from USCENTCOM News Generator reports available from [www.centcom.mil](http://www.centcom.mil)

<sup>42</sup> Anne Ellen Henderson, April 2005, *The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience with Economic Reconstruction in Iraq*, United States Institute of Peace.

key events occurred even before ORHA's arrival: 1. The rapid mobilization of supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr<sup>43</sup> and 2. The death of Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i (son of revered Najaf scholar Grand Ayatullah Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i).<sup>44</sup> Al-Khu'i, who had been protected by US forces on his return to Iraq, was intended to be a Coalition friendly voice within the majority Shi'a community. The loss of this likely strategic ally combined with the emergence of the firebrand Muqtada al-Sadr rocked the ORHA boat and exposed two other challenges to the pre-conflict ORHA planning: lack of resources and security.

Pre-conflict, ORHA identified an abundance of short-term funding requirements. This funding was intended to fund initial reconstruction requirements, pay Iraqi government workers, and retain portions of the Iraqi military.<sup>45</sup> The bulk of this funding was expected via a large supplemental request from DoD to Congress to fund US military and stabilization operations in Afghanistan, as well as Iraq. The problem for Garner was that the supplemental was not approved until September 2003, long after the dissolution of ORHA. The initial funding provided to ORHA had very little discretionary spending with the vast majority of funds given to USAID for reconstruction contracts issued in Washington.<sup>46</sup> Insufficient funding prompted Garner, following a tour of a damaged electrical plant, to make the following statement: "What would be really great, a great tribute to the Iraqi people is for General Electric to come over here

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<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 4 for an analysis of the growth of the Sadr II Movement.

<sup>44</sup> Linda Robinson. 2004. *Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces*. New York: Public Affairs. 2004053531.

<sup>45</sup> The unnamed senior defense official was likely LTG Jay Garner (ret.). At a number of occasions throughout the briefing, the official describes himself in the first person as reporting directly to the CENTCOM Commander.

<sup>46</sup> According to the initial OMB update to Congress, through early June 2003, ORHA and subsequently CPA had \$605M of DoD resources. Of this amount \$333M was dedicated to paying former Iraqi government employees and the remainder used for ORHA and ministries standup. The detailed funds breakout is available at: Office of Management and Budget. *Report to congress: Pursuant to section 1506 of the emergency wartime supplemental appropriations act, 2003 (public law 108-11) (june 2, 2003)*. 2003. Internet on-line. Available from <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/Emergency\\_Wartime\\_Supp\\_Daniels\\_Ltr.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/Emergency_Wartime_Supp_Daniels_Ltr.pdf)>. [August 30, 2004], pg. 15.

and donate some new parts and things that help us get this straight.”<sup>47</sup> This plea for help from an American company portends resource challenges in much larger scope, particularly for security and governance.

**a. Security and Troop Strength**

Decisions made in advance of Operation Iraqi Freedom, greatly impacted ORHA. Potentially, the most costly involved the planning for security. Did DoD, USCENTCOM, and ORHA ignore history’s lessons? Following his experiences fostering rebellion in Mesopotamia during the Arab Campaign of 1916-1918, T. E. Lawrence identified the ingredients for creating a revolt against a foreign, occupying army. Central to his thesis is not the size of the opposition force, but rather the intensity and freedom of movement of the insurgents, combined with the size and capacity of the foreign army. A key criticism of Coalition decisions in Iraq has been the size of both the invasion force and the subsequent occupation armies.<sup>48</sup>

Lawrence described the characteristics of a vulnerable occupation force as follows:

(The rebellion) must have a sophisticated alien enemy, in the form of a disciplined army of occupation too small to fulfill the doctrine of acreage: too few to adjust a number to space, in order to dominate the whole area effectively from fortified posts.<sup>49</sup>

Was the U.S.-led occupation force too small for post-conflict Iraq? It is clear that neither Garner, nor GEN Franks intended to use solely Coalition troops to provide security. A potential source of manpower was the former Iraqi Army. This option was detailed in March 2003 during a briefing conducted by an unnamed U.S. senior defense official outlining plans for the Office of

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<sup>47</sup> CENTCOM News Release, April 23, 2003, *April Pool Report of Mr. Garner's Trip to Baghdad (Part 3 of 3)*, available online from: [http://www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/News\\_Release.asp?NewsRelease=200304167.txt](http://www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/News_Release.asp?NewsRelease=200304167.txt), [August 2005].

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix 2 for an analysis of the growth of the Sunni-based insurgency.

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence, T. E. 1968. *Evolution of a revolt; early post-war writings of T. E. Lawrence*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, pg. 119.

Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).<sup>50</sup> The official described plans for the Iraqi Army as follows:

So one of our goals is to take a good portion of the Iraqi regular army -- I'm not talking about the Republican Guards, the special Republican Guards, but I'm talking about the regular army -- and the regular army has the skill sets to match the work that needs to be done in construction. So our thought is to take them and they can help rebuild their own country. We'd continue to pay them. And these committees will nominate work for them to do, do things like engineering, road construction, work on bridges, remove rubble, de-mine, pick up unexploded ordnance, construction work, et cetera, et cetera. That also allows us -- and using army allows us not to demobilize it immediately and put a lot of unemployed people on the street. So it works a pretty good process. They're working to rebuild their country. It's reestablishing some of the prestige that the regular army has lost over the years, and it allows us to get a lot of good things done for the country.<sup>51</sup>

This plan didn't directly call for use of the military as part of security forces, but kept portions of it available for service, something that didn't occur in post-conflict Iraq. In his memoir, GEN Franks also anticipated the use of portions of the Iraqi military. On the day conflict began in Iraq, GEN Franks forwarded a query to the Pentagon inquiring about resources to pay the Iraqi Army post-conflict.<sup>52</sup> This request went unanswered.

The intended policy of rehabilitation of the Iraqi Army was never fully implemented. This policy was hindered by a series of obstacles: 1. The self-resignation and disappearance of large portions of the remnants of the Iraqi Army<sup>53</sup>; 2. Lack of a cohesive plan as to how to leverage the former Army; and 3. Lack of resources to pay the Iraqi Army. Some units, such as the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, were moderately successful in re-recruiting Iraqi Army personnel to

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<sup>50</sup> The unnamed senior defense official was likely LTG Jay Garner (ret.). At a number of occasions throughout the briefing, the official describes himself in the first person as reporting directly to the CENTCOM Commander.

<sup>51</sup> Department of Defense, 2003, *Backgrounder on Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance in Post-Conflict Iraq*, March 11, 2003, retrieved from [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/t03122003\\_t0311bgd.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/t03122003_t0311bgd.html), [April 2005].

<sup>52</sup> Tommy Franks. 2004. *American Soldier*. New York: Regan Books. 2004558617; pg. \*\*.

<sup>53</sup> Keegan, pg. 4.

serve in post-conflict Iraq, but this policy was not uniform and doomed from the outset due to the lack of resources. ORHA's original plan to recoup portions of the Iraqi Army was tied to having resources to pay them. Maj Gen Patreaus, Commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) described the importance of resources during this initial phase of conflict, "Money is ammunition in this war right now, we didn't have any for a long time."<sup>54</sup> The 101<sup>st</sup> was tasked with Northern areas in post-conflict Iraq.

Would the Iraqi Army have returned to service if called and paid? Likely, yes. When asked, the Iraqi police forces returned to their jobs en masse. Per CENTCOM reports, over 90% of Baghdad's police force had returned to their posts by May 17, 2003. Army personnel would also likely have returned.

Before and after the decision to disband the Iraqi Army, ORHA and later CPA faced increasing concern about security within the Coalition. The figure below identifies increasing violence that caused alarm both to military and civilian leaders.

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<sup>54</sup> Thomas Day. August 7, 2003, "Alabama Senator pays visit to 101<sup>st</sup>," *Iraqi Destiny*, Vol. 1, Issue 34, pg. 5.

## Violence during the ORHA Period

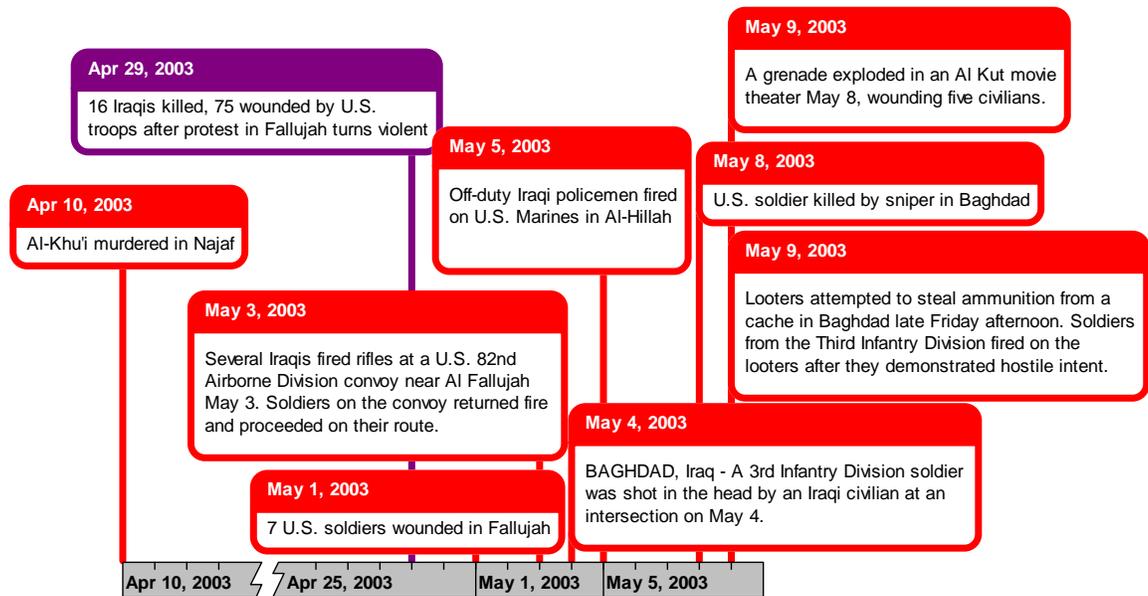


Figure 10. Acts of violence April – May 2003

As noted by the figure above, violence persisted during the ORHA phase, but at very low levels. Even this small amount of violence was in sharp contrast to pre-conflict assumptions of a stable, secure Iraq, causing concern within the Coalition. As violence persisted, another area of pre-conflict planning showed cracks: civil administration and governance.

### 5. Governance

ORHA intended on a rapid transition to Iraqi self-rule. Garner described the next steps toward an Iraqi democracy upon his arrival in Baghdad:

The new ruler of Iraq is going to be an Iraqi. I don't rule anything. I'm the *coalition facilitator* to establish a different environment where these people can pull things together themselves and begin

self-government process. And with our assistance begin a reconstruction process, and end up with a democracy that represents the freely elected will of the Iraqi people. I think [that is in line with what the Iraqi people want], thus far they've responded. But we're flexible.... This is a work in progress.<sup>55</sup>

Following Garner's first meetings with Iraqi religious, tribal, and expatriate leaders, it quickly became apparent that Iraq was not ready for self-rule and that a longer than expected occupation was about to begin.

## **6. Reconstruction During the ORHA Phase**

While the military was providing immediate assistance and essential services restoration, ORHA was responsible for initiating the long-term reconstruction that would enable Iraq to emerge from a decade of sanctions and 30 years of totalitarian rule. The economic challenges facing the Coalition were complex:

- Restoring government economic functions after looting and state collapse;
- Preventing currency collapse, hyperinflation, and economic chaos;
- Rebuilding infrastructure ravaged by war, sanctions, looting, and neglect;
- Rehabilitating a health care system that had not advanced in two decades;
- Dismantling corrupt, dysfunctional state economic controls;
- Stimulating private sector growth stunted by government interference.<sup>56</sup>

Much of the long-term reconstruction activities during the ORHA phase fell to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In advance of conflict, USAID competed and awarded a number of contracts in an attempt to jump start

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<sup>55</sup> CENTCOM News Release, April 23, 2003, April Pool Report of Mr. Garner's Trip To Baghdad (Part 3 Of 3).

<sup>56</sup> Henderson, Anne Ellen, April 2005, *The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience with Economic Reconstruction in Iraq*, United States Institute of Peace, pg. 3.

reconstruction. The figure below identifies the U.S. contractor selected, the contract amount, and emphasis area of the contract.<sup>57</sup>

## USAID Reconstruction Contracts March - July 2003

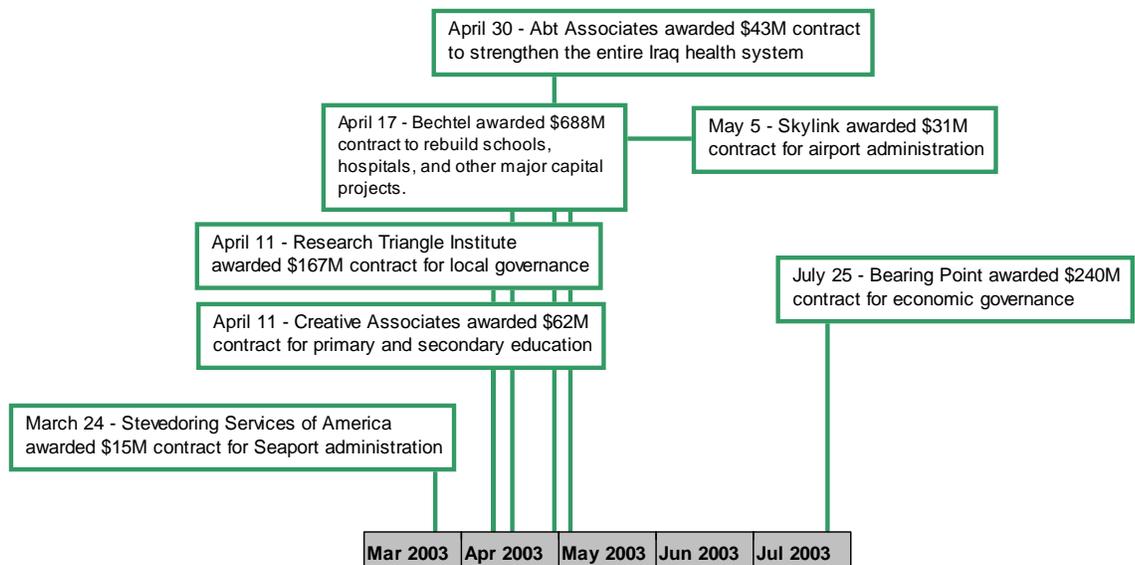


Figure 11. USAID Reconstruction Contracts, March – July 2003<sup>58</sup>

These contracts were a planned step on rebuilding the infrastructure of Iraq. The emerging gap in ORHA reconstruction activities was the availability of job-producing projects. In establishing Civilian Conservation Corps projects in the 1930s, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, “We can take a vast army of these

<sup>57</sup> As reconstruction continued, the number of organizations involved in issuing contracts increased dramatically. See the article Harris, Shane, July 2004, “Outsourcing Iraq,” *Government Executive*, July 1, 2004, pg. 56-63 for an excellent recap of the complexity and scope of reconstruction.

<sup>58</sup> CPA Inspector General, 2005, *Updated Contracts*, retrieved from [http://www.cpa-ig.com/pdf/table\\_j\\_1\\_verified\\_contracts\\_updated.pdf](http://www.cpa-ig.com/pdf/table_j_1_verified_contracts_updated.pdf), [April 2005].

unemployed out into healthful surroundings. We can eliminate, to some extent at least.... the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability.”<sup>59</sup> Idleness was common in pre-conflict Iraq. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq was essentially a welfare state with large portions of the population relying on the state for food rations, benzene, and salaries. This ended with the Coalition invasion. The state ceased to exist and with the end of the state, salaries, food, and benzene rations ended as well.

## **7. ORHA Phase – Impacts on the Population**

During ORHA’s short life span, no polling was conducted to assess the views of the population toward the Coalition.<sup>60</sup> Anecdotal reporting suggests that as Coalition forces entered areas previously oppressed by Saddam Hussein, Coalition forces were greeted as liberators or at worst the population was indifferent to the arrival of Coalition forces.<sup>61</sup> That sentiment appears to have been short-lived. ORHA faced an incredibly difficult assignment. This assignment was made near impossible by the lack of resources to immediately infuse into the reconstruction and security efforts. Following Congressional staff visits to Iraq in June, staffers reported to the Senate Foreign Relations committee problems ORHA faced:

The United States is dealing with a huge expectations gap in Iraq. Following our rapid military success, Iraqis expected that the United States could dramatically improve almost overnight living conditions that had declined precipitously for more than a decade.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Frankling D. Roosevelt. “Civilian Conservation Corps Dedication Ceremony”, Solvang Mission, Solvang, California, 1933..

<sup>60</sup> The first formal poll to be conducted was done by the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies in June 2003. The site <http://www.iraqanalysis.org> maintains links to all publicly available polls.

<sup>61</sup> Keegan, pg. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Lugar, July 2003, *Iraq: Meeting the Challenge, Sharing The Burden, Staying The Course, A Trip Report to the Members of Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/occupation/2003/0730iraqreport.pdf>, pg. 2, [April 2005]..

These unrealistically high Iraqi expectations combined with ORHA's lack of resources combined for increasing pressures on the Iraqi population. The original assumption that Iraq could fund its own reconstruction may have been true, but how quickly? ORHA's gap in resources could not have come at a worse time. In many ways, ORHA and its unmet expectations set the conditions that Coalition forces and the Coalition Provisional Authority will deal with for the remainder of the occupation.

## **B. CPA PHASE I**

ORHA pre-planning anticipated a secure operating environment, a rapid transition to Iraqi self-rule, and a reconstruction largely funded by Iraqi oil. When these expectations proved false, the Coalition radically changed course and established an occupying "authority." The transition from Garner and his "facilitator" role to a unilateral authority led by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer was stark and immediate. The first phase<sup>63</sup> of CPA's rule of Iraq is characterized by a series of critical decisions that will shape the future of Iraq. Any critique of the CPA and these initial decisions should include the caveat that the organization was created one month into the occupation. This late start plagued the organization throughout its short history.

### **1. CPA Challenges**

The mission given to Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority was unprecedented in U.S. history and varied greatly from previous occupations in Germany and Japan. Take a diverse population ruled for 30 years by a totalitarian ruler and transform the government to a democracy and the economy to a free market. Complete this mission in under a year while implementing freedom of religion, ensuring harmony among varied ethnic groups, and recreating an Army and police force. Iraq is a nation roughly the size of California with a population of approximately 24 million. The nation is divided by religion and ethnicity (60% Shi'a , 20% Sunni Arab, and 20% Sunni Kurd and

<sup>63</sup> The designation of Phase I is the author's. This period was critical in determining the future of Coalition efforts in Iraq. It begins with Bremer's designation as the CPA Administrator (May 6, 2003) and extends to the Najaf mosque bombing in August 2003.

now, various political parties.<sup>64</sup> In 1980, Iraq was an economic power, operating as a creditor for the region. Under Saddam's rule, Iraq became an international pariah and was punished by a decade and a half of international sanctions. At the outset of OIF, Iraq was in debt over \$120 billion.<sup>65</sup> The CPA's task, absent any violence, was certainly complex.

The environment faced by CPA was unique. Never before had an element of the U.S. government faced such a highly dynamic, complex environment as an occupying force. Parallels have been drawn to the Marshall Plan and the occupation of Japan, but the CPA situation differed in three major aspects: lack of sustained international participation, arbitrary timelines placed on CPA to transition the government to Iraqi leaders, and strength of the violent opposition.<sup>66</sup> Many dissimilar, external elements influenced and pressured CPA. During the initial phases of CPA, the organization understood the highly complex tasks in governing and rebuilding the nation, but expected that the environment for reconstruction contractors would ultimately be safe and stable.<sup>67</sup> Under these planning assumptions, Bremer was assigned to lead an organization comprised of subject matter experts assigned to the CPA by their respective parent organizations. These initial planning assumptions were key to the initial direction of the organization.

## **2. CPA Initial Decisions**

Unequivocally, Bremer changed the tenor and approach of the Coalition's occupation. Upon his arrival Bremer issued a number of orders that impacted all areas of Iraqi governance, security, and the economy. The two most significant

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<sup>64</sup> Dept of State. (2004). *Background note: Iraq*. Available online from; <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6804.htm>, [August 2004].

<sup>65</sup> M. Vesely. (2004). "Trading Iraq's pre-war debts." *Middle East*, (347), 48.

<sup>66</sup> These conclusions were drawn from a previous group project completed by the author, Chad Jones, and Jaime Gomez.

<sup>67</sup> DoD Inspector General. (2004). *Contracts Awarded for the Coalition Provisional Authority by the Defense Contracting Command-Washington (D-2004-057)*. Available online from: <http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/fy04/04-057.pdf>, pg. 24, [August 2004].

decisions occurred in mid-May: de-Ba'athification and disbanding of the Iraqi Army. Much has already been written on the impacts of de-Ba'athification on governance and reconstruction. Rather than rehash these analyses, I will revisit the de-Ba'athification decision in context of CPA relations with the majority Shi'a population. Likewise, the disbanding of the Iraqi Army will be examined in a review of the security situation during this time period<sup>68</sup>. Other critical decisions impacted the governance of Iraq. The first was the decision to appoint a limited Iraqi advisory body, known as the Iraqi Governing Council, as a first step toward Iraqi self-rule. The second and perhaps equally important governance decision stopped local elections; thereby abandoning the initial approach implemented by regional Coalition military commanders and instead substituted appointments over elections.<sup>69</sup>

### **3. CPA Objectives**

Within a month of its establishment, the CPA had identified four overarching objectives that served as the basis for its strategy in Iraq. According to the first of several quarterly OMB reports mandated by Congress, the CPA sought to establish a secure environment for the Iraqi people and for the conduct of relief and recovery activities; to achieve measurable improvement in the lives of the Iraqi people; to maximize contributions from other countries and organizations; and to support Iraqis as they prepared for democratic self-government.<sup>70</sup> Figure 1 summarizes the “four pillars” of CPA's objectives.

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<sup>68</sup> See Fallows for a discussion of troop strength decisions leading up to the conflict.

<sup>69</sup> Diamond, pg. 34.. Both Diamond and Feldman provide insight into the governance decisions in Iraq. Also see Sistani's website at <http://www.sistani.org/messages/eng/ir5.htm> for the English version of Sistani's June 2003 statement demanding direct elections. This simple one paragraph statement is very close to the eventual compromise election plan negotiated by the United Nations.

<sup>70</sup> Office of Management and Budget. (2003). *Report to congress: Pursuant to section 1506 of the emergency wartime supplemental appropriations act, 2003 (public law 108-11) (June 2, 2003)*. Availalbe online from [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/Emergency\\_Wartime\\_Supp\\_Daniels\\_Ltr.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/Emergency_Wartime_Supp_Daniels_Ltr.pdf), pg. 2, [August 2005].

Security	– Establish a secure environment for Iraqi people and conduct of relief and recovery
Improve Lives	– Achieve measurable improvement in the lives of the Iraqi people
Maximize Contributions	– Maximize contributions from other countries and organizations
Support Democracy	– Support Iraqis as they prepare for democratic self-government

Figure 12. CPA objectives (June 2003)

To achieve these aggressive objectives, CPA required trained, proficient professionals ready to land in Iraq and make immediate progress. The organization was largely a pickup team with an organizational structure drawn in haste to redirect Coalition efforts in Iraq.

#### 4. CPA Organizational Structure

On May 22, 2003, UN Security Council Resolution 1483 recognized the role of the United States and Great Britain as the occupying authorities responsible for the interim governance of Iraq.<sup>71</sup> Bremer codified the Coalition Provisional Authority as the entity responsible for discharging these duties with promulgation of CPA Regulation #1.<sup>72</sup>

To populate the CPA, U.S. government agencies were tasked to provide experts in highly specialized, complex areas, such as, governance, international law, electrical engineers, etc. These highly complex tasks combined with a one-year timeline required highly trained professionals. While envisioned on paper, the professional bureaucracy did not completely mature due to the hostility. All military billets in the organization were filled, but military expertise focused on

<sup>71</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1483, 22 May 2003, available from <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/368/53/PDF/N0336853.pdf?OpenElement>, [May2005].

<sup>72</sup> L.P. Bremer. *Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1*. 2003. Internet on-line. Available from <[http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516\\_CPAREG\\_1\\_The\\_Coalition\\_Provisional\\_Authority\\_.pdf](http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516_CPAREG_1_The_Coalition_Provisional_Authority_.pdf)>. [August 2004].

rapid re-establishment of essential services, not the long-term reconstruction tasked to CPA. Civilian positions expected to handle specialized tasks, such as constitutional and international law, foreign debt negotiations, judicial reform, and creating Iraqi governmental institutions, were gapped with only one third of all civilian positions filled due to lack of volunteers.<sup>73</sup> CPA's personnel challenges were significant, but the most challenging organizational issue facing CPA was the command relationship between CPA and Coalition Forces.

**a. Split Chain of Command**

One of the most critical organizational hurdles facing the Coalition in Iraq was the creation of two separate chains of command for security. In his founding regulation, Bremer identified CPA's authorities:

The CPA shall exercise powers of government temporarily in order to provide for the effective administration of Iraq during the period of transitional administration, to restore conditions of security and stability, to create conditions in which the Iraqi people can freely determine their own political future, including by advancing efforts to restore and establish national and local institutions for representative governance and facilitating economic recovery and sustainable reconstruction and development.<sup>74</sup>

This order clearly identified CPA as the organization responsible for "restoring conditions of security and stability," yet in the next paragraph Bremer acknowledges that the ability to carry out security is under the purview of U.S. Central Command:

As the Commander of Coalition Forces, the Commander of U.S. Central Command shall directly support the CPA by deterring hostilities; maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity and security; searching for, securing and destroying weapons of mass

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<sup>73</sup> United States General Accounting Office. (2004). *Rebuilding Iraq (GAO-04-902R)*. Available online from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04902r.pdf>, pg. 37, [August 2004].

<sup>74</sup> Bremer, L. P., *Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1*. 2003. Internet on-line. Available from <[http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516\\_CPAREG\\_1\\_The\\_Coalition\\_Provisional\\_Authority\\_.pdf](http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516_CPAREG_1_The_Coalition_Provisional_Authority_.pdf)>. [August 2004].

destruction; and assisting in carrying out Coalition policy generally.<sup>75</sup>

Both organizations responded to the Secretary of Defense, but military commanders in Iraq reported to U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida, while Bremer reported directly to the Pentagon. The organization chart below shows the split chain of command.

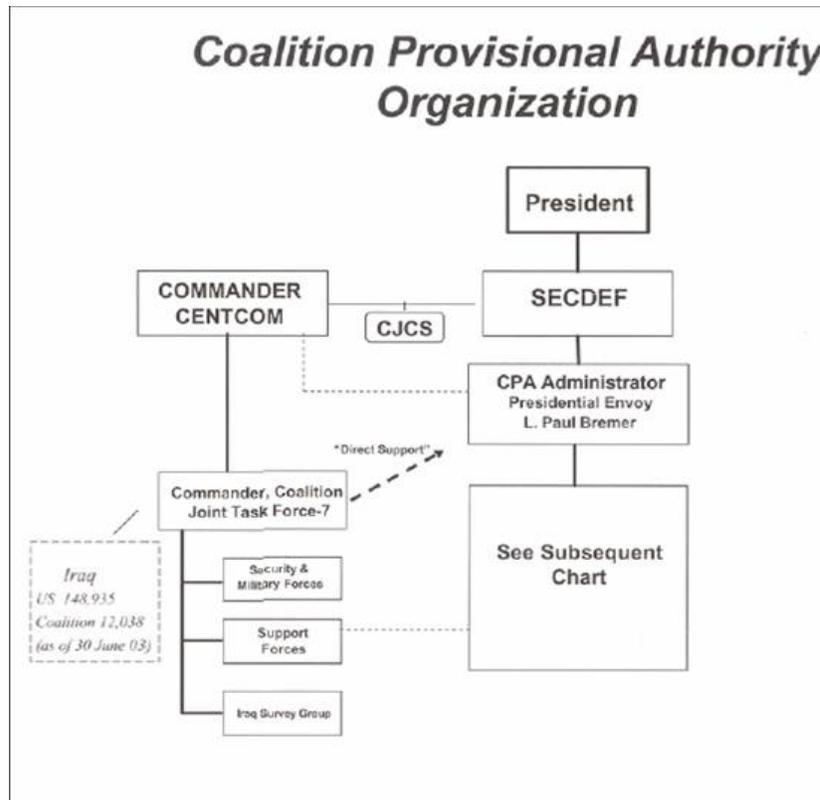


Figure 13. CPA and USCENTCOM Command Relationships<sup>76</sup>

This relationship eventually evolved to a near-term, long-term split of responsibilities with Coalition forces responsible for near term security and CPA responsible for investing in the long term recreation of Iraqi security forces. From the outset, security fell squarely on the shoulders of Coalition military forces. Bremer's decision to dissolve the Iraqi Army placed an even larger burden on Coalition forces. The challenge facing Coalition forces was

<sup>75</sup> Bremer.

<sup>76</sup> United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 29, 2003, *Iraq: Status and Prospects for Reconstruction-Resources*, Washington D.C., pg. 86.

maintaining T.E. Lawrence’s “doctrine of acreage.” An alarming trend emerged during the May – July 2003 timeframe. This threat was the increase of low level attacks on Coalition forces. These early attacks were uncoordinated sniper, grenade, and RPG attacks on patrols moving through Iraq. Figures 7 and 8 show the increase in attacks, as well as the resulting casualties.

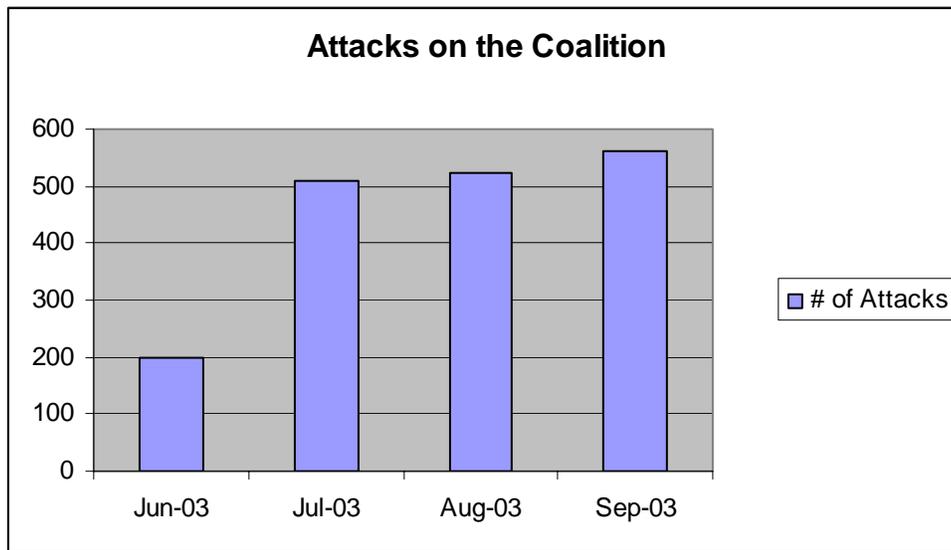


Figure 14. Attacks on the Coalition – June – September 2003<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> O'Hanlon, M., A. L. de Albuquerque. *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables Of Reconstruction & Security In Post-Saddam Iraq*. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>>. [Dec 2004], pg. 18. Brookings has compiled these numbers based on Coalition reports. The June 2003 numbers are incomplete. Based on compilation method, the above numbers are not exact, but represent the trend experienced in Iraq.

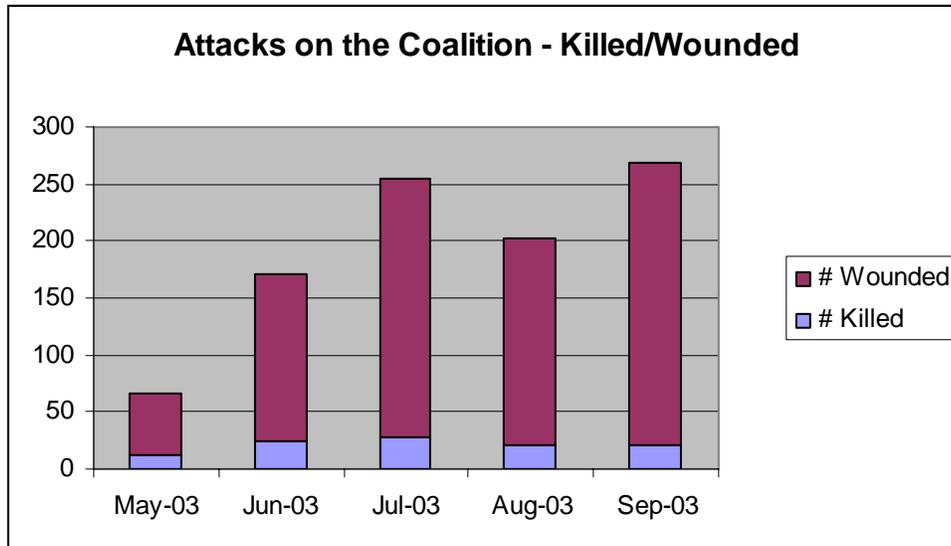


Figure 15. Coalition Killed/Wounded from Opposition Attacks<sup>78</sup>

As attacks increased, Coalition forces began to again conduct combat operations (see Figure 9 below) focused on rooting out the violent opposition and former regime elements. These operations further diluted troops available to provide security and assurance for the Iraqi population.

<sup>78</sup> M. O'Hanlon., A. L. de Albuquerque. *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables Of Reconstruction & Security In Post-Saddam Iraq* . Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>>. [Dec 2004]. The killed in action numbers are a combination of Brookings' numbers. They include U.S. deaths from hostile action, UK deaths, and other Coalition military deaths during the time period. Wounded in action numbers are only available for US forces.

## Significant Military Operations Conducted during CPA Phase I

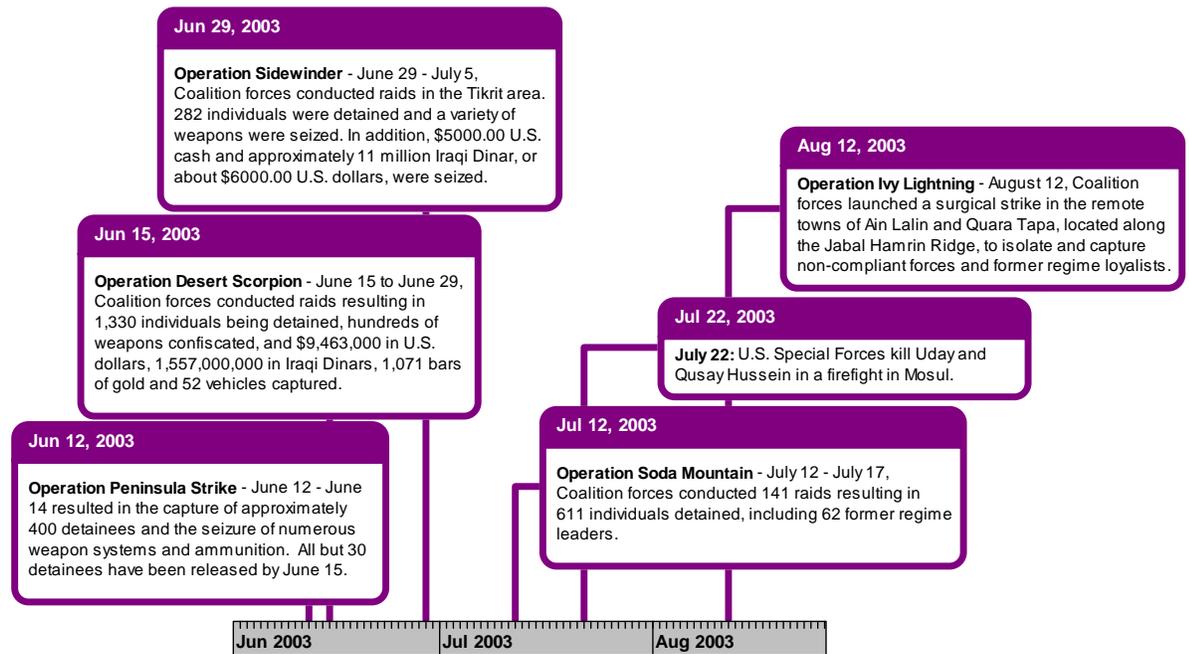


Figure 16. Significant Military Operations – June – August 2003<sup>79</sup>

This distancing of Coalition forces from the population caused two major problems: First, Coalition forces could not dominate all contentious areas, thereby providing opportunities for opposition to organize and mobilize; and second, contact with the local population decreased, just as the need for better human intelligence (HUMINT) increased. Simultaneously, the increasing number of attacks forced Coalition military leadership to emphasize force protection for Coalition forces over contact with the Iraqi population. This created a vicious circle. Unsure of the nature and scope of the enemy, Coalition leadership emphasized greater force protection, which limited contact with the population, and further expanded the information deficit on the growing insurgency. The

<sup>79</sup> Compiled from reports obtained from US CENTCOM News Generator, available from [www.centcom.mil](http://www.centcom.mil)

growing information gap exacerbated the pressures and challenges facing both Coalition forces, as well as the CPA.

## **5. Intelligence – Identifying the Enemy**

The Coalition characterization of the opposition in Iraq evolved slowly over the life of the conflict. Originally, U.S. senior leaders and military officials identified the opposition as solely made up of dead-enders or foreign terrorists. This initial mischaracterization placed the United States at a severe information disadvantage in relation to the growing insurgency. This information disadvantage was caused by three primary considerations:

- The traditional failure of a conqueror to conceive an insurgency is forming;
- Fixation on strategic requirements centered on weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and
- Failure to provide security for the Iraqi population.

This initial information gap created in the May to August 2003 timeframe gave the growing opposition opportunity to expand largely unimpeded and placed the Coalition in an information deficit that severely impacted Coalition efforts.

Moreover, while the opposition was mobilizing in the underground, the United States' immediate focus following the conflict was on reducing troop strength and finding anticipated weapons of mass destruction. As violence against the Coalition increased, senior leaders placed the blame on dead-enders and foreign terrorists. Inadvertently, a gathering storm was developing in terms of a distinct information advantage for a growing opposition. Bruce Hoffman, a RAND counterinsurgency expert, notes that this interpretative lens is common for occupying forces:

The fact that military planners apparently didn't consider the possibility that sustained and organized resistance could gather momentum and transform itself into an insurgency reflects a pathology that has long afflicted governments and militaries everywhere: the failure not only to recognize the incipient conditions for insurgency, but also to ignore its nascent

manifestations and arrest its growth before it is able to gain initial traction and in turn momentum.<sup>80</sup>

How significant was the information deficit? Anthony Cordesman, Arleigh Burke Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies identified the keys areas of information deficit for the United States post-conflict in Iraq:

There is another critical set of intelligence problems which related to the intelligence assessment of the Iraqi opposition, the attitudes of the Iraq people, and the divisions within Iraq as a nation and which have proved to be of critical importance during conflict termination and the initial phases of nation building. One problem was that policymakers either did not want objective intelligence on the nature and capabilities of various elements of the external and internal Iraqi opposition or the intelligence community did not provide it.<sup>81</sup>

Compounding the conceptualization problem for Coalition forces was the emphasis of intelligence activities within Iraq. Finding and controlling weapons of mass destruction was clearly the number one intelligence mission. Given the unshaken belief by senior administration leaders that WMD was present, this emphasis is understandable, yet with intelligence resources looking the other way, an insurgency was able to form and expand. During meetings with senior DoD and Joint Task Force – 7 officials in Iraq, the situation was described that a full 50% of intelligence personnel serving in Iraq were dedicated to the Iraqi Survey Group's mission.<sup>82</sup> If the Iraqi Survey Group identified potential opposition activities, it was required to hand off this information to the newly formed Joint Task Force – 7 intelligence cell. Simultaneously, Joint Task Force – 7 was dealing with growing violence against Coalition forces and the Iraqi people. The response to this violence sealed the fate of the information disadvantage in Iraq.

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<sup>80</sup> Bruce Hoffman. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*. June 2004. Available from [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2005/RAND\\_OP127.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf), [August 2005].

<sup>81</sup> Cordesman, Anthony, *Intelligence Failures in the Iraq War*, July 19, 2003, pg. 43. Available from: [http://www.csis.org/features/iraq\\_instantlessons.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/iraq_instantlessons.pdf), [September 2004].

<sup>82</sup> Author's meetings in Iraq, 2003-2004. Confirmed during follow-up interviews, May 2005.

Faced with limited understanding of the makeup and scope of the opposition, the Coalition implemented force protection measures to better protect Coalition forces. These measures included increased emphasis on the creation and securing of large firebases and implementation of patrolling techniques that distanced Coalition troops from the Iraqi population.<sup>83</sup> The Coalition's change from presence to patrol heavily impacted the relationship between Coalition forces and the Iraqi populace. The ability of an army to effectively secure the population establishes a relationship with the population. The population need not like the army, but the population must trust that the army will protect the population from the insurgents. Bruce Hoffman describes the phenomenon, "It is a truism of counterinsurgency that a population will give its allegiance to the side that will best protect it."<sup>84</sup> Increasingly, Coalition forces were asked to conduct offensive operations throughout the country, secure the cities and the countryside, all while still providing humanitarian assistance and point security at critical locations in Iraq.

The impact of this growing chasm between the population and Coalition forces was an increasing information disadvantage. Noted counterinsurgency and national security scholar Andrew Krepinevich recently described the importance of securing the population to Congress,

The key to defeating an insurgency is to attack it at the source of its strength: the population. If the counterinsurgent forces can deny the insurgents' access to the people, the insurgents become like fish out of water, denied sources of manpower and information. The insurgents' problem is further compounded if the people feel secure enough from retribution to provide counterinsurgent forces with intelligence on insurgent movements and the identities of cadre members. The prospects for gaining such intelligence are further advanced if the counterinsurgent forces have won the people's "hearts," by offering them the prospect of a better way of life if the insurgents are defeated, in addition to having won their "minds" by convincing the people that the insurgents will be defeated and that the government can provide the personal security necessary to

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<sup>83</sup> Author's interview with senior DoD official and author's meetings in Iraq during 2003 and 2004.

<sup>84</sup> Hoffman, pg. 15.

convince individuals to provide the intelligence needed to identify who the insurgents are, and where they are located.<sup>85</sup>

In Iraq, these three key developments of: 1) failure to grasp marks of a rising insurgency, 2) focus on weapons of mass destruction, and 3) failure to protect the population translated to a severe information deficit for the Coalition. As insufficient intelligence resources were applied to collecting and analyzing its emergence the impacts on the Coalition were clear and lasting. The Jones Report specifically identified the intelligence shortfalls facing the Coalition in the period immediately following the fall of the Hussein regime:

As commanders at all levels sought operational intelligence, it became apparent that the intelligence structure was undermanned, under-equipped, and inappropriately organized for counter-insurgency operations. Upon arrival in July 2003, MG Barbara Fast was tasked to do an initial assessment of the intelligence architecture needed to execute the CJTF-7 mission in Iraq. Technical intelligence collection means alone were insufficient in providing the requisite information on an enemy that had adapted to the environment and to a high-tech opponent. Only through an aggressive structure of human intelligence (HUMINT) collection and analysis could the requisite information be obtained. Communications equipment, computers, and access to sufficient bandwidth to allow reachback capabilities to national databases were needed to assist in the fusion and collaboration of tactical through strategic intelligence data. Disparate cells of different agencies had to be co-located to allow access to respective data bases to assist in the fusion and collaboration effort.<sup>86</sup>

Military leadership responded quickly to this problem once recognized, but the information advantage ceded to the opposition during the May-August 2003 timeframe gave the opposition opportunity to organize and grow.

## **6. CPA Phase I – Impacts on the Population**

During the initial phases of the occupation, the Iraqi population took the brunt of increasing violence. Figure 10 identifies the number of Iraqi civilians

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<sup>85</sup> Krepinevich, pg. 6.

<sup>86</sup> Anthony Jones. *AR 15-6 Investigation of the Abu Ghraib Detention Facility and 205th Military Intelligence Brigade*. 25 August 2004. Available from <<http://www.c-span.org/pdf/armyabughraib.pdf>>, [March 2005], p. 17.

killed as a result of war, either by opposition attacks or collateral damage as part of Coalition operations. While these numbers identify the problem of lingering violence and attacks by the Iraqi opposition, the more surprising and damning numbers deal with crime-related deaths in Baghdad.

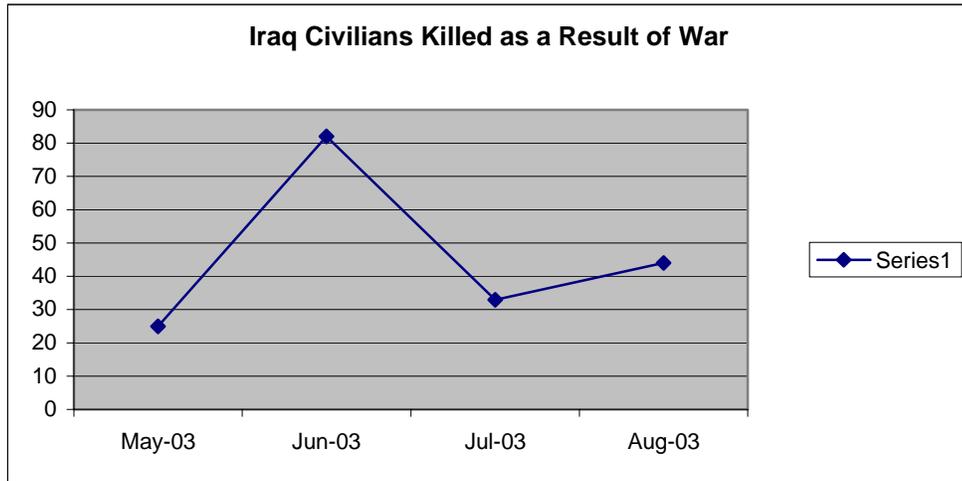


Figure 17. Iraqi Civilians Killed During CPA Phase I<sup>87</sup>

Crime-related numbers reflect only Baghdad. In Baghdad 95% of all police officers had returned, the Coalition had added 9,000 troops to improve security in the nation's capital, yet crime-related violence grew.

<sup>87</sup> M. O'Hanlon, A. L. de Albuquerque. *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*. June 2 2005. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>>. [June 2005]. These numbers have been converted from deaths per 100,000 to numbers based on Baghdad's population of 5.6M.

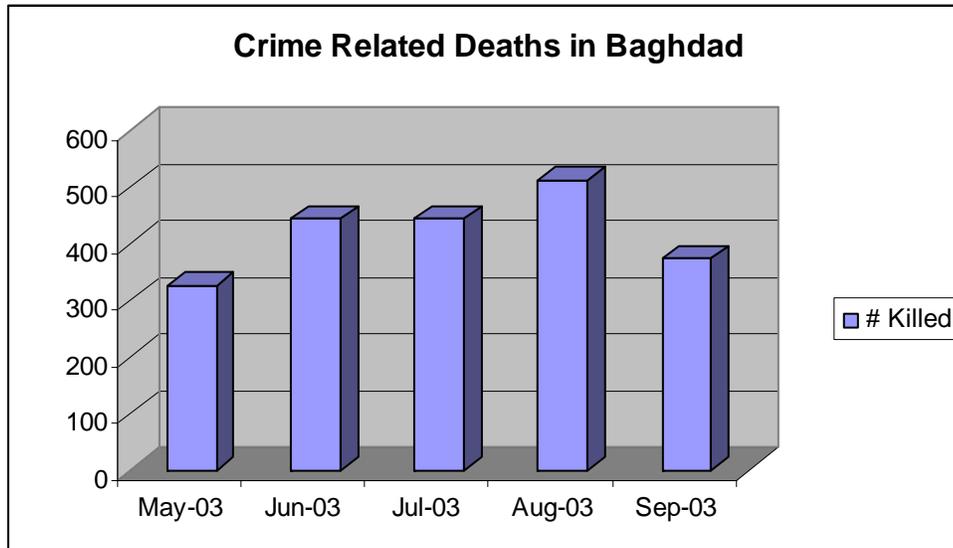


Figure 18. Crime-related deaths in Baghdad – May – September 2003<sup>88</sup>

In comparison, Washington D.C.'s annual murder rate hovers around 250 per year<sup>89</sup> and Baghdad an estimated 5500. When comparing the murder rate per 100,000, during this time frame, Baghdad averaged an annualized rate of 90 crime-related deaths per 100,000 while Washington D.C., 43<sup>90</sup>. Within the region, none of the nation's capitals have a published murder rate, but Jordan, with a total population of 5.6M has maintained a murder rate of 6.7 per 100,000 nationwide.

This apparent lack of security coincides closely with initial polls conducted by the Iraq Center for Research and Security Studies (ICRSS) in June 2003. The poll concluded: 74% described the current security situation as bad; 74% described the economy as bad; and 94% said that efforts to rebuild key sectors of the economy had so far failed.<sup>91</sup> The increasing Iraqi discontent with the

<sup>88</sup> M. O'Hanlon, A. L. de Albuquerque. *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*. Feb 11 2005. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>>. [February 2005].

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Richard Lugar, July 2003, Iraq: Meeting The Challenge, Sharing The Burden, Staying The Course, A Trip Report to the Members of Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, available from <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/occupation/2003/0730iraqreport.pdf>, pg. 2, [April 2005].

Coalition manifested itself in other ways. Figure 12 shows protests and riots that resulted in at least one Iraqi death.

### Protests/Riots Resulting in Iraqi Deaths April-September 2003

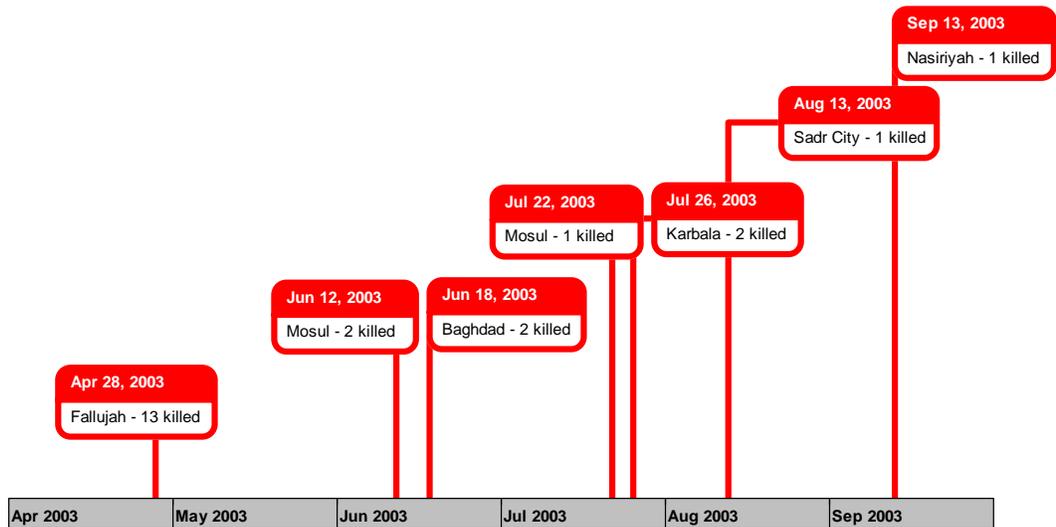


Figure 19. Protests/Riots Resulting in Iraqi Deaths, April to September 2003<sup>92</sup>

In addition to the increasing violence, the Iraqi population had another large problem: jobs. In June 2003, Bremer stated:

Unemployment today is a tremendous problem. Our best estimate is that before the war, the unemployment was at about 50 percent - - five-zero percent -- and we think it's substantially higher than that now. So there can be no higher priority now than trying to find a way to create jobs. The chronic underinvestment in infrastructure is going to have to be dealt with, and we're going to have to find ways

<sup>92</sup> Information for this chart compiled from Iraq Body Count database, available from [www.iraqbodycount.net](http://www.iraqbodycount.net)

to get productive activity going, particularly economic activity that creates jobs.<sup>93</sup>

CPA attempted to improve the situation through establishment of a \$100M construction initiative implemented in mid-June 2003.<sup>94</sup> In July, the CPA also reinitiated monthly payments to former Iraqi Army personnel.<sup>95</sup> Also in July the Office of Management and Budget reported to Congress that the future of Iraq's economy lay in the rapid move to a free-market economy. The report said,

The CPA's priority will be to encourage rapid transition to an economy guided by free market principles. These have been shown, in case after case, to offer the quickest way to generate efficient and job-creating economic activity. The Coalition must also make the case for the role of foreign investment in the development of Iraq.<sup>96</sup>

Converting Iraq from a rentier state to a market economy was a grand goal, but to do so would further increase the pressure on an Iraqi population already concerned with increasing violence and crime. One segment of the population that the CPA could not afford to lose was the majority Shi'a population.

#### **a. Impacts on Shi'a Community**

Critical to the success of Coalition efforts in Iraq was developing the trust and confidence of the Shi'a population. As violence increased in the traditionally Sunni areas of Iraq, the Coalition needed stability and peaceful relations with the population in the traditionally Shi'a areas of Iraq. As previously discussed, Coalition efforts to build bridges to the Shi'a community were initially hampered by two key events: 1) The death of al-Khu'i; and 2) The emergence of

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<sup>93</sup> L. Paul Bremer, June, 2003, *Briefing on Coalition Post-war Reconstruction and Stabilization Efforts*, available from: <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030612-0269.html>, [September 2004].

<sup>94</sup> Joshua Bolten, July 2003 Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 1506 of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 108-11), *90 Day Update Report On United States Strategy For Relief And Reconstruction In Iraq*, available from: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/1506.pdf>, [September 2004], pg. 6.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, pg.6.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, pg.6.

Muqtada al-Sadr as the leader of the Sadr II Movement. In this critical phase of occupation, the Coalition could ill afford violence emerging in the Shi'a areas.<sup>97</sup>

At this critical juncture (May 2003), Bremer was appointed and immediately de-Ba'athified the country. This first key decision was likely at least partially directed at the Shi'a community within Iraq. In one pen stroke, Bremer eliminated all remnants of the repressive Hussein regime. This decision eliminated the top layers of the Iraqi government bureaucracy, causing CPA to rebuild the leadership in every Iraqi ministry, severely impacting the transition to Iraqi control. Yet, in defense of the decision, the UK envoy to the CPA, John Sawers, described the de-Ba'athification decree last summer as the "most popular thing the CPA had done."<sup>98</sup> The de'Ba'athification decision was likely popular within the Shi'a community, but another key governance decision placed Bremer at odds with the senior Shi'a religious figure in the country, Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani.

Bremer's decision to appoint the Iraqi Governing Council rather than prepare for a direct election caused Sistani to issue a fatwa<sup>99</sup> decrying the decision.<sup>100</sup> In short, the fatwa stated that the Coalition had no authority to appoint a body to write a constitution for Iraq. Sistani called for direct elections so that each Iraqi citizen could select the representatives for a constitutional assembly. The fatwa tied the hands of the constitution preparation committee and stopped their work completely.<sup>101</sup> With a short eloquent paragraph espousing democracy over CPA appointments, the supposedly apolitical Sistani had heavily impacted the political process. It would not be the last. Sistani's

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<sup>97</sup> Anthony Cordesman, August 2003, *What is Next in Iraq? Military Developments, Military Requirements and Armed Nation Building, August 21-25, 2003*, pg. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Jonathan Steele, June 2004, *US Man Bows Out, Still The Optimist*, The Guardian, available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,1248755,00.html>, [September 2004].

<sup>99</sup> Noah Feldman. 2004. *What We Owe Iraq: War and The ethics of Nation Building*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2004016041, pg. 40.

<sup>100</sup> Full text of the approved English translation is available at <http://www.sistani.org/messages/eng/ir5.htm>.

<sup>101</sup> Feldman, pg. 40.

importance in post-conflict Iraq cannot be overstated. As the senior most cleric in the hierarchical Shi'a society, Sistani played the key role in establishing the direction of political events and maintaining relative calm within the Shi'a population.

### 7. Steps toward successfully implementing CPA Objectives

The growing violence in Iraq was a serious negative impact on the population, yet not everything was negative. Some positives emerged providing hope that the situation would improve. The figure below identifies the important events:

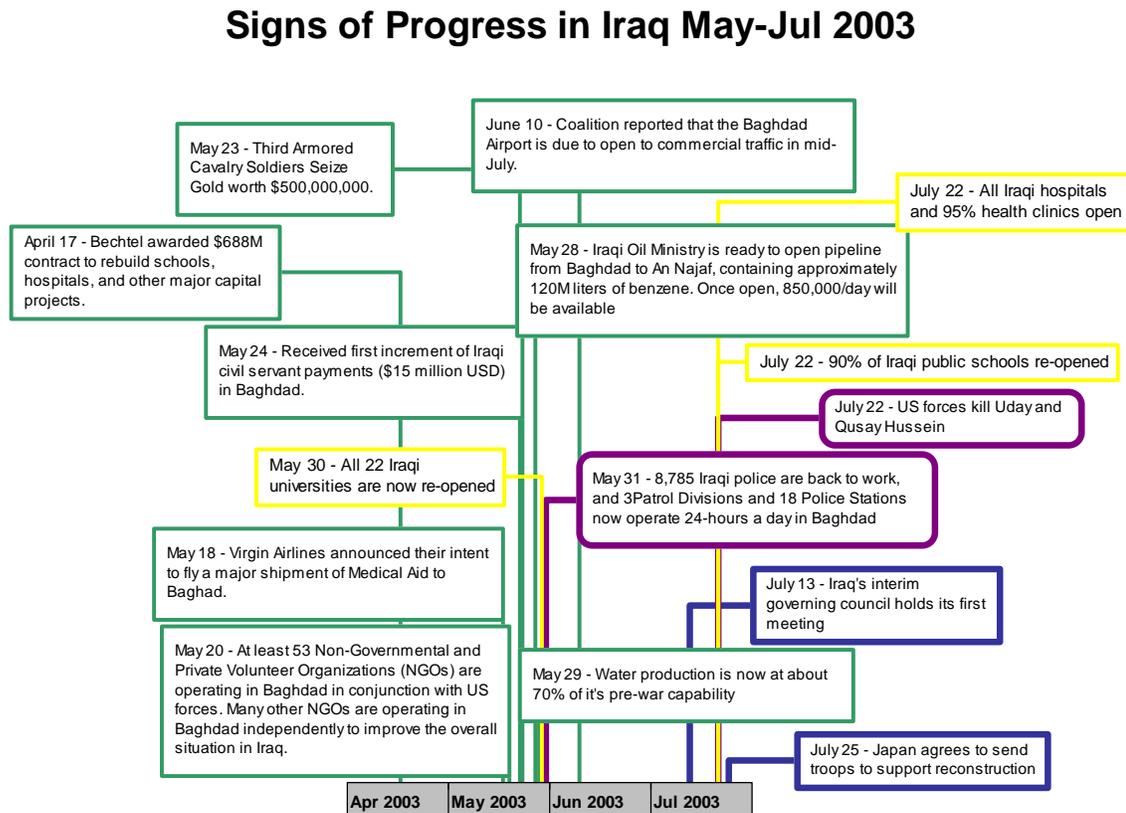


Figure 20. Positive events in Iraq, May – Jul 2003

These apparent positive events could not overcome the increasing violence. In August, the intensity of the violence would irreversibly change the face of the occupation and the opposition.

## 8. Turning point – August 2003

The Iraqi population had endured violence and uncertainty during the early periods of occupation, but the worst was yet to come. As Figure 14 indicates, attacks during Phase I culminated with devastating attacks in August, 2003.

### Major Attacks on Iraqi Civilians - CPA Phase I

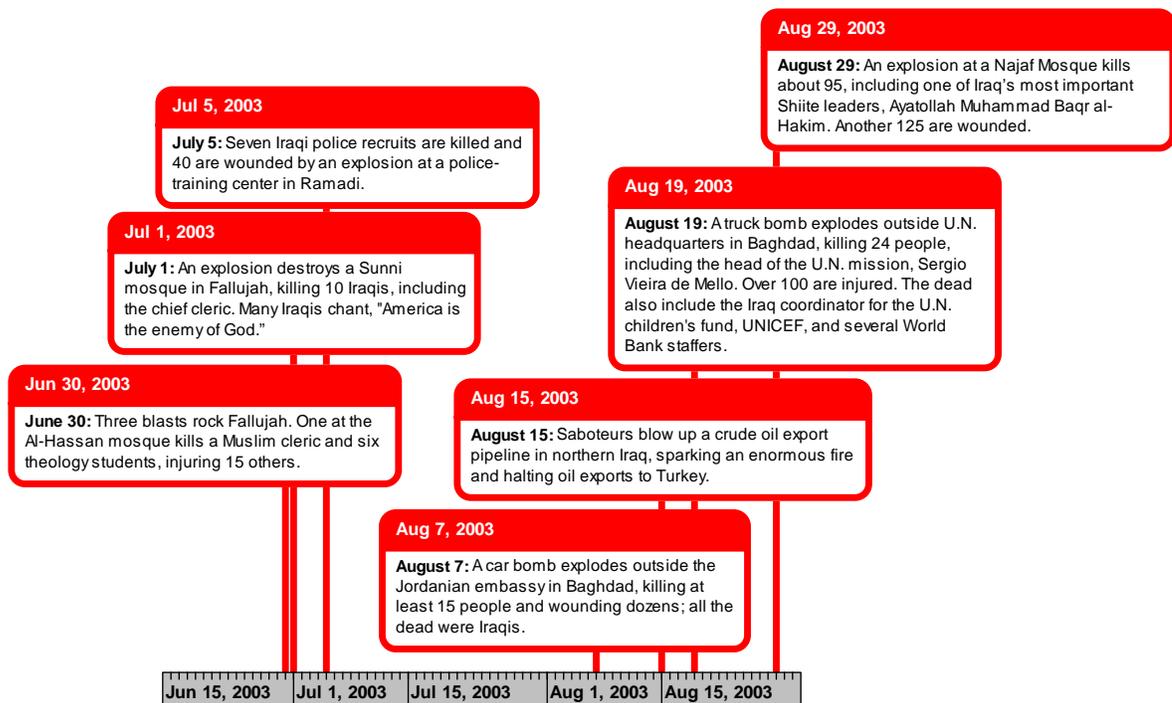


Figure 21. Major Iraqi Opposition Attacks Resulting in Iraqi Civilian Deaths, May-Aug 2003

The two most deadly attacks killed two important figures in post-conflict Iraq: Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN Chief of Mission in Iraq, and Ayatullah al-Hakim, a senior Shi'a cleric and head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). The death of de Mello caused the United Nations to remove its

presence in Iraq, withdrawing an enormous opportunity for the Coalition to “internationalize” the occupation. The death of Hakim and 124 other Shi’a worshippers outside one of the holiest Shi’a sites increased the possibility of sectarian violence and removed a potential ally for the Coalition.<sup>102</sup> Figure 15 shows the dramatic change in Iraqis killed/wounded as a result of major casualty bombings.

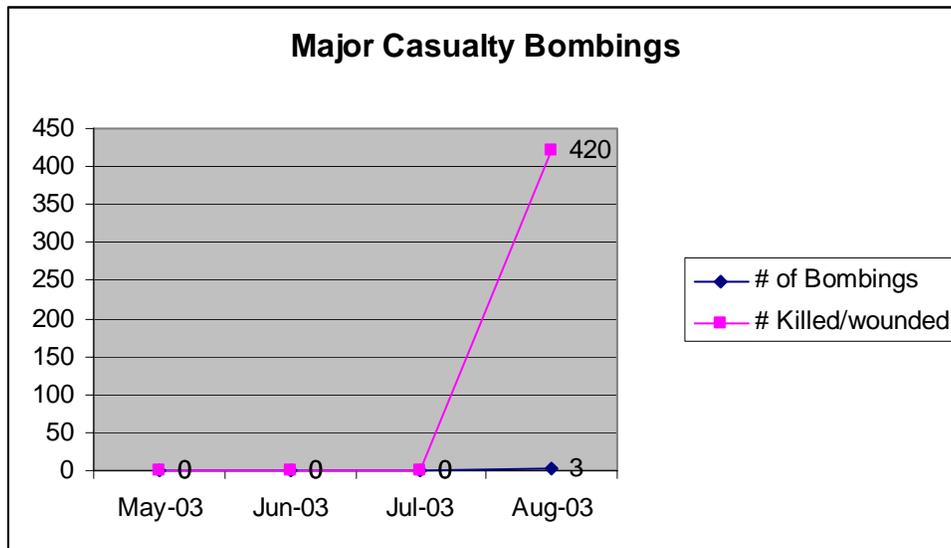


Figure 22. Major Casualty Bombings – May – August 2003<sup>103</sup>

This deadly new tactic was introduced by the remnants of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s group.<sup>104</sup>

**a. Re-emergence of Zarqawi**

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has seized the opportunity in Iraq to transition from two-bit thug to international terrorist. Zarqawi was a relative

<sup>102</sup> CNN. *Najaf Bombing Kills Shiite Leader, Followers Say*. Aug 30 2003. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/08/29/sprj.irq.najaf/>>. [August 2005].

<sup>103</sup> O'Hanlon, M., A. L. de Albuquerque. *Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>>. [February 13, 2005].

<sup>104</sup> Clancy, Jim, Pam Benson. *Tape: Al-Zarqawi Claims Responsibility for Wave of Attacks*. April 6 2004. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/04/06/us.zarqawi/>>. [August 2005].

unknown outside counterterrorism circles until February 2003, when Secretary of State Powell announced that Zarqawi was Iraq's tie to Al-Qaeda:

Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi an associate and collaborator of Usama bin Laden and his al-Qaida lieutenants...Those helping to run this camp are Zarqawi lieutenants operating in northern Kurdish areas outside Saddam Hussein's controlled Iraq. But Baghdad has an agent in the most senior levels of the radical organization Ansar al-Islam that controls this corner of Iraq.<sup>105</sup>

It was in this unique status of being targeted by the United States that Zarqawi was provided his political opportunity. Newsweek's Iraq Correspondent, Rod Nordland, described the metamorphosis of Zarqawi, "It wasn't long ago that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was a two-bit thug. The Iraq War gave him a platform that most terrorists can only dream of."<sup>106</sup> The U.S.-led dismantling of the Saddam Hussein regime afforded Zarqawi the opportunity to transition from regional terrorist to global jihadist.

Zarqawi and his group were not able to immediately translate the fall of the Hussein regime into actions against the Coalition. Targeted as part of the initial Coalition strikes in Iraq, Zarqawi's safe haven with Ansar al-Islam was destroyed. This may have delayed his plans, but did not destroy his existing mobilization structures. Zarqawi entered Iraq with a social network of terrorist operatives in place. Matthew Levitt, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation terrorism analyst says that, "(Zarqawi) is the most active and frenetic terrorist commander out there today."<sup>107</sup> Zarqawi's initial attacks made a statement, one that the world clearly heard.

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<sup>105</sup> Colin Powell. *Remarks to the United Nations Security Council, February 5, 2003*. Feb 5 2003. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/17300.htm>>. [Mar 1, 2005].

<sup>106</sup> Rod Nordland, Christopher Dickey. 2004. "Hunting Zarqawi." *Newsweek* 144, no. 18 (Nov 1): 32.

<sup>107</sup> David S. Cloud. "Elusive Enemy: Long in U.S. Sights, A Young Terrorist Builds Grim Resume; On Journey to Iraq, Zarqawi Forged Ties With al Qaeda, Attracted Own Followers; An Amputation in Baghdad." *Wall Street Journal*, 2004. Feb 10.

## 9. CPA Phase I - Conclusions

The most critical development in this phase was the increase in violence from both opposition attacks, as well as criminal acts. Tied closely to this upturn in violence were the Coalition's decisions that impacted the number of troops for the occupying Coalition Forces. The most critical of these decisions was Bremer's decision to disband the Iraqi Army.

This decision left US Central Command with few options to increase forces. In August 2003, Anthony Cordesman identified the three equally, unappealing options:

- More U.S. troops.
- Turn to the U.N. for assistance
- Create new Iraqi forces<sup>108</sup>

He identified each of these options as unpalatable. The U.S. was already engaged in Afghanistan and had already committed 150,000 troops to Iraq. Members of the UN with large enough force structure to significantly contribute had already refused support and were not likely to risk their forces in the deteriorating security situation. And finally, recruitment of new Iraqi security forces would not produce troops in the short term in large enough numbers to significantly impact security.<sup>109</sup> This left the existing Coalition Forces and the ragtag remnants of the Iraqi police to deal with the threat.<sup>110</sup>

MG Ray Odierno, Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, outlined the scope of the task facing his forces in June 2003:

Right now, over 27,000 troops of Task Force Iron Horse stand vigilant throughout a sprawling area that encompasses three provinces in northeastern and central Iraq. Our area of responsibility stretches from just north of Baghdad to the Iranian border in the east, and stretches north to the oil fields north of

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<sup>108</sup> Anthony Cordesman, August 2003, *What is Next in Iraq? Military Developments, Military Requirements and Armed Nation Building*, August 21-25, 2003, pg. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Kalev Sepp, Prepared Statement before House Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Washington, D.C., March 14, 2005, available from [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2005\\_hr/050314-sepp.pdf](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2005_hr/050314-sepp.pdf), [May 2005].

Kirkuk and includes Taji, Tikrit, Samarra and Balad, and west to Lake Tharthar. This is an area comparable in size to the state of West Virginia. Since Task Force Iron Horse arrived in the area of operations in late March, Iron Horse soldiers have conducted combat operations against the Iraqi army, paramilitary and Ba'ath Party forces, and simultaneously, we have conducted stability operations that have had a significant impact in reducing the suffering of free Iraqi citizens and set the initial conditions for the return to normalcy in Iraq. Although major combat operations have concluded, our soldiers are involved in almost daily contact with noncompliant forces, former regime members and common criminals. To defeat these attacks and to continue to improve the security and stability within our area, the task force is conducting search and attack missions, presence patrols and raids to disarm, defeat and destroy hostile forces, as well as to capture the former regime members.<sup>111</sup>

The number of 4<sup>th</sup> ID troops identified by MG Odierno does not indicate how many of the 27,000 troops were combat forces engaged in active operations. This number likely includes the division headquarters staff and support personnel not available for combat operations.

Coalition policies, such as disbanding the Iraqi Army, combined with the minimalist approach to resources in the ORHA and CPA Phase I, placed Coalition troops at a distinct disadvantage. Added to the challenge were Coalition policies on economic reconstruction. The large scale reconstruction projects initiated by USAID made long-term sense, but did little to produce employment in the short term. Without the resources on hand to return portions of the Iraqi Army to work and limited employment prospects, the Iraqi Army was returned to the Iraqi populace with at least some military training and no prospects for employment. Increasing unemployment and a lack of pervasive security forces added to the difficulties facing the Coalition. In effect, the challenges facing the Iraqi population and the nascent Coalition created a situation that had predictable results.

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<sup>111</sup> Ray Odierno, Maj. Gen. Odierno Video teleconference from Baghdad, June 18, 2003, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030618-0281.html>, [May 2005].

## **10. T.E. Lawrence: Foretelling the Outcome**

In his book, retelling the lessons from the adventures of Lawrence of Arabia, T.E. Lawrence succinctly captured the conditions required for fostering revolt in Arab lands. Had Coalition polices inadvertently created these conditions? Lawrence identifies the conditions, the rebellion must have:

- An unassailable base, something guarded not merely from attack, but from the fear of it
- A sophisticated alien enemy, in the form of a disciplined army of occupation too small to fulfill the doctrine of acreage
- [An occupier] too few to adjust number to space, in order to dominate the whole area effectively from fortified posts
- The few active rebels must have qualities of speed and endurance, ubiquity and independence of arteries of supply
- [The rebels] must have the technical equipment to destroy or paralyze the enemy's organized communication
- A friendly population, not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy

Were these conditions present during the occupation period, April – August 2003?

## **11. Applying Lawrence's Framework to Iraq**

The characteristics of the occupying Army were undoubtedly present. The number of Coalition troops could not immediately fulfill the doctrine of acreage, not in terms of security for the population. The increasing attacks by the opposition in the face of stepped up Coalition military operations proved the speed and endurance of the opposition; while the technical equipment to conduct attacks was readily available in the form of vast amounts of ordinance and ammunition left over from the Hussein regime. The two remaining elements: a secure base of operations and support of the population are less clear.

As discussed previously, at the outset of the occupation, Coalition forces operated at a distinct information disadvantage. The Coalition had chosen offensive operations and aggressive patrolling in an attempt to round up the dead-enders and former regime leaders. The Coalition did not have a clear

understanding of the opposition and sources for its growth. In essence, this information deficit provided a blanket of security for the opposition. Over time, this ability of the enemy to evade Coalition forces and press additional violence upon the Coalition and the population would eventually develop into secure operating areas; no-go zones,<sup>112</sup> such as Fallujah and Samarra.<sup>113</sup>

The final condition is perhaps the most critical. The role of the population in Iraq was in doubt during this time frame. The first scientific polls were conducted in August 2003 and provide a window into the conflicted thoughts of the population toward the Coalition and the growing opposition.

## 12. Views of the Population toward the Coalition

The Coalition may have been met as liberators, but by August confidence was waning in the Coalition. Table 12 shows the results of Oxford Research's first poll of the Iraqi populace.

August 2003: How much confidence do you have in the following organizations?		
	CPA	Occupation forces
Great Deal	7.0%	7.6%
Quite a lot	19.6%	13.6%
Not Very Much	29.9%	22.2%
None at all	43.5%	56.6%

Table 5. Iraqi population's view of the Coalition – August 2003<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> In author interviews with personnel who served in these areas, no-go zones translated into areas that could not be accessed for any purpose other than combat operations. No Coalition troops were garrisoned inside these areas, nor did reconstruction or policing activities occur.

<sup>113</sup> Matthew Stannard. "The Challenge of Controlling Iraq," *San Francisco Chronicle*. 24 September 2004. Available from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2004/09/24/MNG5R8UFPO1.DTL>, [April 2005].

<sup>114</sup>Oxford Research International.

The same poll also identified what issues were important to Iraqis four months into the occupation. The population's priorities are identified in Table 2. Plainly, the population's highest priority was regaining public security. Interestingly, from the same Oxford Research poll is the result of the following question: Which of the following is no priority at all? A full 91% of those surveyed said that their lowest priority is dealing with the members of the former regime. While the Coalition searched for the "deck of cards" was the Coalition losing the population?

August 2003: Please tell me your priorities for the next 12 months?			
	First priority	Second priority	Third priority
Regaining public security	67.3%	10.3%	10.3%
Rebuild infrastructure	8.7%	32.4%	32.4%
Following religious ideals	5.0%	6.1%	6.1%
Iraqi self-governance	4.6%	9.1	9.1
Reviving economy	4.1%	13.6%	13.6%
Ensure that population can earn a decent living	3.8%	15.0%	20.0%

Table 6. Iraqi population's priorities – August 2003<sup>115</sup>

Lawrence also tells us that: "Rebellions can be made by 2 percent active in a striking force and 98 percent passively sympathetic."<sup>116</sup> The initial Oxford polling data showed that significant portions of the population still had some confidence in the CPA and Coalition forces. Other polls from the August – September 2003 timeframe suggest that the population was not yet lost. A USA Today/Gallup poll identified that 62% of Baghdad residents felt that ousting

<sup>115</sup>Oxford Research International.

<sup>116</sup> Lawrence, pg. 119.

Saddam Hussein was worth the hardships endured since the invasion. The poll also reflects the challenges of the security situation in Baghdad:<sup>117</sup>

- 86% have been afraid to go outside their home during the previous four weeks; and
- 94% felt that Baghdad is a more dangerous place now (Sept 2003) than before the invasion

Finally, the poll showed the conflicted views of the population toward Coalition forces. A clear majority (71%) felt that U.S. troops should stay longer in Iraq, yet 36% believed that attacks on the Coalition forces are sometimes justified.<sup>118</sup>

As the initial phase of CPA's occupation came to a close, enormous challenges remained, many of which were created by initial Coalition policies. Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency expert, Bruce Hoffman, described this period of the Iraq occupation as a time when the U.S.-led Coalition "lost a critical window of opportunity."<sup>119</sup> The initial policies adopted by the post-conflict leadership placed Coalition forces at a severe disadvantage. Coalition forces responded with aggressive offensive operations and patrolling, a tactic that attempted to eliminate the opposition before it expanded. Left to feel the brunt of Coalition policies and tactics was the Iraqi population. Not all of the population was lost during this period, but undoubtedly the seeds were sown. Coalition policies and tactics impacted areas of the country differently. The varied dynamics present in both the Sunni-dominated center of Iraq, as well as the Shi'a south provided opposition forces different opportunities to mobilize. Within the Shi'a community, an emerging force was the presence and growth of the Sadr II movement.

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<sup>117</sup> M. O'Hanlon, A. L. de Albuquerque. *Iraq index: tracking variables of reconstruction & security in post-saddam iraq* . Feb 11 2005. Internet on-line. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf>>. [February 13, 2005], pg 38.

<sup>118</sup> O'Hanlon, pg. 38.

<sup>119</sup> Bruce Hoffman. 2004. "Plan of Attack." *The Atlantic Monthly* 294, no. 1 (Jul/Aug) : 42.

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## IV. THE SADR II MOVEMENT

### A. AN ORGANIZATIONAL FIGHT FOR LEGITIMACY WITHIN THE IRAQI SHI'A COMMUNITY

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Shi'a population in Iraq was overnight converted from disenfranchised minority to an emboldened majority. This rapid devolution of power within Iraq, created organizational conflict within the Shi'a community as leaders vied for authority. Within the Shi'a religious hierarchy an unexpected force emerged, Muqtada al-Sadr. Using social movement theory<sup>120</sup> as a framework for analysis, I will examine the Sadr II movement in the context of political opportunity, organization, and the framing used to mobilize support. While Sunni-based insurgents and foreign elements led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi have contributed the predominance of violent actions against the Coalition, Muqtada al-Sadr represents the only named, public figure that stands in opposition to the Coalition and the emerging Iraqi government. While the August 2004 standoff in Najaf and the January 2005 elections produced setbacks for the Sadr II movement, the same mobilization structures and message that motivated his following remains as a potentially strong, violent opposition to a budding Iraqi democracy.

#### 1. Sadr II Movement: Opportunities and Mobilizing Structures<sup>121</sup>

Muqtada al-Sadr is the leader of the Shi'a opposition in Iraq which demanded expulsion of Coalition forces and creation of an Iraqi theocratic government. His rise to prominence within the Shi'a community largely went unnoticed by the United States government. In retrospect, a leader emerging from the al-Sadr school of Islamic thought should not have been a surprise, but

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<sup>120</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz. 2004. *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University Press.

<sup>121</sup> Political opportunity examines the interaction between an emerging movement and existing political structures, examples include: regime change, abandonment of a nation by a foreign power, domestic policy shifts, or legal changes. Mobilizing structures are the engine of a social movement, acting as the informal and formal vehicles, through which groups mobilize and engage in collective action. For additional information on social movement theory see Wiktorowicz or McAdam.

the emergence of young, Muqtada al-Sadr as the leader could not have been anticipated.<sup>122</sup> Muqtada al-Sadr has assumed the mantle as “speaking cleric” demanding a more activist role for Iraqi Shi’a leaders. In doing so, he continues the opposition to secular government begun by his father-in-law<sup>123</sup>, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (killed by the Hussein regime in 1982)<sup>124</sup> and his father Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr (killed by the Hussein regime in 1999).<sup>125</sup>

The Shi’a community in Iraq has endured repression and subjugation for over 100 hundred years. Beginning with the Sunni-dominated Ottoman Empire and continuing through the rule of Saddam Hussein, the Shi’a have experienced discrimination and oppression. Recent history in Saddam’s Iraq has been particularly brutal.

Following the Shi’a revolution in Iran, the Hussein government feared the rise of a sympathetic movement developing in Iraq.<sup>126</sup> At that time, the Al-Dawa al-Islayyya Party espoused such a position. One of al-Dawa’s leaders was Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, who had separated his activist message from the traditional, apolitical message of the leading clerics in Shi’a shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala. In the aftermath of Khomeni’s Revolution in Iran, Saddam Hussein had Muhammad Baqir-al Sadr killed. Prior to his death, Baqir al-Sadr guided his cousin, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr through his Islamic studies, graduating him as an independent scholar of legal reasoning in 1977. Sadiq al-Sadr continued his

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<sup>122</sup> Faleh Jabar. “Clerics, Tribes, Ideologues and Urban Dwellers in the South of Iraq: the potential for Rebellion.” In Dodge, Toby, Steven Simon, and International Institute for Strategic Studies. 2003. *Iraq at the Crossroads : State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. New York: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, p. 171.

<sup>123</sup> In many articles Baqir al-Sadr is referred to as Muqtada’s uncle. Juan Cole’s research concludes that Muqtada married Baqir’s daughter and that Sadiq al-Sadr, Muqtada’s father, is Baqir’s cousin.

<sup>124</sup> Juan Cole. 2003. “The United States and Shi’ite religious factions in post-Ba’thist Iraq.” *Middle East Journal* 57, no. 4 (Autumn): 543.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p.3.

studies and by the mid-1990s began calling for an Iraqi state governed by Islamic law.<sup>127</sup>

Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr attacked the Hussein regime, clearly distinguishing him from traditional, apolitical Shi'a leaders, such as Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani. Sadiq al-Sadr called himself the "speaking jurisprudent" and labeling Shi'a leaders in Najaf, "silent jurisprudents."<sup>128</sup> In doing so, Sadiq al-Sadr created a growing following, particularly among urban Iraqi youth. Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr defied the Hussein regime, organizing Friday prayers, which had been forbidden in Shi'a mosques. Iraq sociologist Faleh A. Jabar described Sadiq al-Sadr's growing popularity:

Al-Sadr was originally a handpicked government appointee, but he grew publicly critical of Ba'ath Party rule in his widely attended sermons. For the first time in a generation, a Shi'ite *imam* built vast networks of followers among the peasantry and the urban middle classes, and forged an alliance with influential urban merchants and tribal chieftans<sup>129</sup>.

Eventually, Sadiq al-Sadr's defiance cost him his life. In early 1999, he was gunned down while traveling to his office in Najaf. The successor to Sadiq al-Sadr, Ayatullah Kazim al-Hairi, studied in Qom, Iran, far from the base of the Sadr movement.<sup>130</sup> While it appeared that the Sadr movement had been broken, in reality the Sadr movement survived but had been forced to the underground. Within the underground, Muqtada al-Sadr seized the opportunity to ascend to the leadership of the Sadr movement.

In his analysis of potential Shi'a leaders that could emerge in post-Saddam Iraq, Faleh A. Jabar anticipated the re-emergence of the Sadr II

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<sup>127</sup> Mahan Abedin, "Dossier: The Sadrist Movement", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 6, July 2003. Available from [http://www.meib.org/articles/0307\\_iraqd.htm](http://www.meib.org/articles/0307_iraqd.htm), [March 2005].

<sup>128</sup> Cole, pg.3.

<sup>129</sup> Toby Dodge, Steven Simon, and International Institute for Strategic Studies. 2003. *Iraq at the Crossroads : State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. London ; New York: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies., p. 171.

<sup>130</sup> Ayatollah Kazim al-Hai'ri was studying in Iran when designated by Sadiq al-Sadr as his designate. Prior to the fall of Hussein's regime, al-Hai'ri decided to stay in Iran following the conflict, where he remains.

movement.<sup>131</sup> What he did not anticipate was the role Sadiq al-Sadr's 20-something<sup>132</sup> son would play as leader of growing numbers of disenfranchised youth. Muqtada al-Sadr's ascendancy to the role of accepted leader of the Sadr movement seemed highly unlikely. At the time of the U.S. invasion, Muqtada al-Sadr, was likely under the age of 30, had not yet completed his Islamic studies, and had been almost unknown in the West. His personal opportunity was ordained by three key events: 1. The death of his father; 2. The decision by Ayatullah Kazim al-Hai'ri to remain in Iran; and 3. Al-Hai'ri's subsequent designation of Muqtada al-Sadr as his representative in Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr seized the opportunity to lead the Sadr II movement. The political opportunity for the Sadr movement was provided by the U.S.-led Coalition. The toppling of the Hussein regime created a power vacuum in urban Shi'a areas, which was quickly filled by the Sadr II movement.

Under Muqtada al-Sadr's leadership, the Sadr movement contrasted itself with the positions of other Shi'a leaders. These leaders included: Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani (an Oracle of Emulation representing traditional Shi'a jurisprudence), Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim (leader of Iranian-based Supreme Council for Islamic Republic of Iraq), and Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i (son of revered Najaf scholar Grand Ayatullah Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i). In this group, Muqtada al-Sadr and his growing vanguard of young clerics positioned the Sadr II movement as the strongest advocate for an Iraqi Islamic state governed by Islamic law without the interference of foreign powers.

While the 1990's Sadr movement of Sadiq al-Sadr never reached the following of Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani or al-Khu'i, Sadiq al-Sadr's followers created a tight-knit network of mosque leaders prepared to respond to Muqtada al-Sadr's call. This call went out even before Baghdad's fall.

Based on the rapidity of action, Muqtada al-Sadr's movement was prepared to act. According to Juan Cole, al-Sadr "established the most effective

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<sup>131</sup> Jabar..

<sup>132</sup> Muqtada al-Sadr's age is estimated between 25-30.

religious opposition movement in Iraq.”<sup>133</sup> As U.S. tanks dashed across Iraq, Muqtada al-Sadr and his vanguard of like-minded clerics reactivated mosques, deployed a militia, assumed control of regional Ba’ath Party institutions, and prepared social services. While traditional leaders in Najaf waited for Saddam to topple, Sadrist clerics opened mosques closed by the Ba’athists for Friday prayers. Al-Sadr focused his efforts in the Shi’a slums of Sadr City (renamed from Saddam City after the fall of Baghdad), Kufa, as well as the Shi’a holy city of Najaf.

Sadr used “mosques and Sadr movement preachers” as the primary mobilizing structures. As evidence of the advanced preparation, on April 9, 2003, Ayatullah Kazim al-Hai’ri (Sadiq al Sadr’s designate) recognized Muqtada al-Sadr as his representative in Iraq. Even as Baghdad was being liberated, Sadr established his legitimacy to lead the Sadr II movement. As Sadr’s militia patrolled the streets of Sadr City and Kufa in April 2003, Sadr and his like-minded clerics crafted the message to rally and sustain the Sadr legacy.

## **2. Frames of the Sadrist Movement<sup>134</sup>**

In a brilliant move, Muqtada al-Sadr used frames provided by an already trusted and martyred source, his father, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. Muqtada al-Sadr declared that only the rulings issued by Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr (and by extension al-Hai’ri) were to be followed. By doing so, he attempted to discredit the rulings of Grand Ayatullahs al-Sistani and al-Hakim, while also deftly avoiding the issue of his lack of religious credentials.

Sadrist mosque leaders, who led prayers on 9 April, echoed the message of Sadiq al-Sadr:

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<sup>133</sup> Cole.

<sup>134</sup> Frames and framing processes are simple but effective ways to define the movement and the problem being addressed in a way that is persuasive to a large audience. For additional information on framing see Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald. “Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes-toward a Synthetic Comparative Perspective on Social Movements.” In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 1-20. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Loyal, devout Iraqis live by Islamic law
- Oppose foreign influence
- Iraqi clerics who fled Iraq abrogated their responsibilities
- Clerics not born in Iraq (al-Sistani) should not speak for Iraqis
- God (not the U.S. Coalition) freed the Iraqi people

This message provided the foundation for the cultural frames that Sadr would use to create a unique collective identity.

The foundation of Muqtada al-Sadr's ideology and message is Shi'a Islam, specifically an activist, puritanical view espoused by his father.<sup>135</sup> All other frames and movement actions flow from this idea. In doing so, Muqtada al-Sadr's movement focused on distinguishing itself from other leaders within the Iraqi Shi'a community, as well as the U.S.-led Coalition. All supporting frames focused on actions and symbols that distinguish Muqtada al-Sadr and the Sadr II movement from traditional Iraqi Shi'a jurists. What results is an intra-community (Iraqi Shi'a) fight for credibility and stature.<sup>136</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz describes this phenomenon in Islamic movements as:

A movement group...asserts its authority to speak on behalf of an issue or constituency by emphasizing the perceived knowledge, character, and logic of its popular intellectuals while attacking those of rivals. Four basic framing strategies relevant to the credibility of popular intellectuals are identified: 1) vilification—demonizing popular intellectuals; 2) exaltation—praising in-group popular intellectuals; 3) credentialing—emphasizing the expertise of the in-group intellectuals; and 4) de-credentialing—raising a question about the expertise of rivals.<sup>137</sup>

While Wiktorowicz's research focuses on the role of credibility within a Sunni context, his framework holds true for analyzing Shi'a Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr initiated a "competition for resources and symbolic leadership" within the

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<sup>135</sup> Cole.

<sup>136</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz. 2004. "Framing jihad: Intramovement framing contests and al-Qaeda's struggle for sacred authority." *International Review of Social History* 49: 159.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

Shi'a community in Iraq.<sup>138</sup> Each of these strategies has been employed by the Sadr II movement to improve the stature of Muqtada al-Sadr, while attempting to mitigate the influence of far more senior, traditional Shi'a jurists.

Separating the Sadr II movement from traditional Shi'a clerics, Muqtada al-Sadr moved rapidly to provide services, while simultaneously vilifying rival jurists. The Sadrists moved quickly following the fall of the Hussein regime to claim legitimacy. While the Sadrists filled a gap in Shi'a slums, offering social service support and establishing security patrols, their most significant action was holding Friday prayers, as early as 9 April 2003. In doing so, Sadrist clerics distinguished themselves from supporters of Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani, who chose not to hold prayers until security had improved throughout the country. Additionally, Sadr attacked al-Sistani for remaining apolitical in the face of the Coalition occupation, labeling al-Sistani "apolitical because he is not an Iraqi."<sup>139</sup> Similarly, the Sadr Movement vilified other Shi'a jurists, such as al-Hakim and al-Khu'i because they had fled Hussein's Iraq in exile.

In contrast, the Sadrists also exalted the teachings of Muqtada's father. The Sadr II movement also quickly emphasized the legitimacy of Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr's message. Saddam City was renamed Sadr City in tribute to Sadiq al-Sadr, his picture placed on every street corner, and mosque leaders echoed his message. Given the lack of a senior Islamic scholar within the Sadr II movement, the movement instead focused on the message of the martyred Sadiq al-Sadr, with Muqtada al-Sadr declaring that only the legal rulings of Sadiq al-Sadr were to be followed.<sup>140</sup>

For the Sadr II movement, credentialing was a challenge. Traditionally, the Iraqi Shi'a community is very hierarchical. Islamic scholars labor for years to receive their credentials as Islamic jurists, ultimately being conferred with the title of "Oracle of Emulation." Muqtada al-Sadr has not completed his studies

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<sup>138</sup>Wiktorowicz.

<sup>139</sup> Cole p.12.

<sup>140</sup> This stands in contrast with traditional Iraqi Shi'a legal jurisprudence. All "Oracles of Emulation" held equal authority to issue legal rulings.

and does not have the authority to issue legal rulings. To overcome this limitation, the Movement instead focused on the legal rulings of Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, as the only true representative of the Shi'a community. The message is powerful, Sadiq al-Sadr was an Iraqi, Sadiq al-Sadr did not retreat into exile, and Sadiq al-Sadr gave his life for Iraqis by standing up to the Hussein regime. The irony in the message is that for Muqtada al-Sadr to claim legitimacy to this legacy, it required Sadiq al-Sadr's envoy in Iran (al-Hai'ri) to designate Muqtada al-Sadr as the Sadrist representative in Iraq.<sup>141</sup>

If credentialing the youthful Muqtada al-Sadr was a challenge, in Shi'a Iraq, questioning the expertise of senior clerics, such as Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani was by far the most difficult frame to support. To do so, the Sadrists did not challenge rival clerics by questioning their scholarly legitimacy, but rather developed sub-frames to weaken these leaders' moral authority. These sub-frames focused on four themes: anti-coalition, foreign influence, moral courage, and exclusivity of faith.

The Sadrists attacked the "silent jurists" in Najaf for not speaking out against the Coalition. Within days of the fall of Baghdad, Sadrist clerics called for the rapid departure of the Coalition. At the same time, they castigated traditional Shi'a clerics, such as al-Sistani and al-Hakim for remaining quiet. Muqtada al-Sadr used his father's martyrdom at the hands of Saddam as the symbol of the only Shi'a religious movement willing to risk death to free the Iraqi people. He attacked al-Sistani as being a foreigner (having been born in Iran), al-Hakim for his ties to Iran, and al-Khu'i for living in exile. He accused all of them as being "silent" and complicit with the American occupation. While attacking these leaders on moral grounds, Sadr also distinguished the Sadrist vision for Shi'a Iraq from those of his rivals. The highly puritanical, shari'a-based Islamic state that Sadr envisioned was in sharp contrast to the apolitical views of traditional Najaf. This exclusivity was used to mobilize Shi'a (in particular the youth) as activists in the emerging Sadr II movement.

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<sup>141</sup> Cole, pg.11.

In the battle for organizational control of the Iraqi Shi'a population, the Sadr II movement successfully used multiple frames to mobilize collective action.

### 3. Repertoires of Action<sup>142</sup>

The Sadr II movement leveraged its mobilizing structures very early in the occupation, rapidly producing repertoires of collective action that distinguished the Sadrists from traditional Najaf. Charles Tilly in his book, The Politics of Collective Violence, described the nature of violence within contentious politics:

Collective violence occupies a perilous but coherent place in contentious politics. It emerges from the ebb and flow of collective claim making and struggles for power. It interweaves incessantly with nonviolent politics, varies systematically with political regimes, and changes as a consequence of essentially the same causes that operate in nonviolent zones of collective political life.<sup>143</sup>

The analysis of the Sadr II movement's collective action will focus on this "interweaving" of violent and non-violent collective action as part of a larger of a larger organizational struggle for control within the Iraqi Shi'a community.

Muqtada al-Sadr successfully mixed a range of non-violent actions as part of the movement's contentious actions. As early as April 19, 2003, Sadrists demonstrated against the U.S.-led occupation.<sup>144</sup> The Sadrist mosques also became a central hub for social services. In August 2003, Juan Cole reported:

Observers on the ground report that the Sadr Movement controls the major mosques, Shi'ite community centers, hospitals, and soup kitchens in East Baghdad, Kufa, and Samarra, and has a strong presence in Najaf, Karbala, and Basra, as well. It is highly networked, and its preachers have taken a strong rhetorical line against what they view as an Anglo-American occupation.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Repertoires of action are the actions, both violent and non-violent, used by a movement in pursuit of common interests represent the repertoires. For additional information see Tilly.

<sup>143</sup> Charles Tilly. 2003. *The politics of collective violence*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 238.

<sup>144</sup> Cole, pg.12.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

The Sadrists extended the use of non-violence to include providing security within Shi'a areas unoccupied by the Coalition forces. These non-violent acts challenged the role of the Coalition. While these non-violent acts reinforced the Sadr message, it was violent contention that the Sadr Movement directly challenged the Coalition.

Immediately following the U.S. "thunder run" into Baghdad, the Sadr II movement embraced violence as a repertoire of collective action. As previously discussed, the mosque was the foundation of mobilization within the Sadr II movement. Mosques became not only a mobilization structure, but a powerful symbol for the movement. In particular, the historic mosques in Najaf and Karbala were used by the Sadr II movement as symbols in both non-violent and violent collective action. While the Sadrists' most significant and violent collective actions occurred in stand-offs with the Coalition in 2004, the Sadr II movement had in fact used violent actions, as early as April 2003, to expand the movement.

As the Hussein regime fell, Sadrists filled the power vacuum in Shi'a slums. Sadrist militias liberated weapons and began patrolling areas as a security force. While Sadrists were providing security in Sadr City and Kufa, some of Sadr's most loyal (and violent) supporters in Najaf quickly turned to violence. The Imam Ali shrine in Najaf is one of the holiest Shi'a sites in Iraq. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Saddam's forces had used the mosque as a safe haven to attack advancing U.S. forces. Once Saddam's fedayeen fled the mosque, the mosque was controlled by a Sadr II militia. It was here on April 10, 2003 that Sadrists would use violence as a means of contention in the Shi'a organizational conflict.

When attempting to gain access to the Imam Ali mosque controlled by Sadr Movement forces, Abd al-Majid al-Khu'i was the first casualty of organizational violence. Al'Khu'i, the son of the former Object of Emulation, challenged the Sadr forces and attempted to gain control of the mosque. An Iraqi journalist describes the scene:

An angry crowd gathered in the square outside the shrine, chanting slogans in favor of Muqtada al-Sadr. Determined to prevent Kalidar from becoming established at the shrine, they demanded that he be surrendered to them. They were also enraged that al-Khu'i was accompanied by Mahir al-Yasiri, an Iraqi Shi'ite settled in Dearborn, Michigan, who was part of an expatriate group helping the US forces and who was wearing a US flack jacket. The encounter became a firefight when someone in al-Khu'i's party, perhaps al-Khu'i himself, fired a pistol over the heads of the Sadr Movement mob. They replied with gunfire, killing al-Yasiri. Eyewitness Ma'd Fayyad says that after an hour-long standoff, al-Khu'i and his party surrendered. He then maintains that al-Khu'i and others were bound and taken to Muqtada al-Sadr's house, but that the latter declined to admit them and that the word came back out that they should be killed in the square. Fayyad admits, however, that he had loosened his ropes and escaped before this point, so that he may have had this story second hand. Other accounts suggest a more spontaneous mob action, in which the crowd closed on al-Khu'i and Kalidar and stabbed them to death.<sup>146</sup>

An Iraqi judge investigated the incident and determined that the "mob" was in fact operating under the guidance of Muqtada al-Sadr, issuing a warrant for Sadr's arrest for the death of al-Khu'i.<sup>147</sup> According to the judge, Sadr's militia brought al-Khu'i to Sadr's Najaf headquarters to seek guidance from al-Sadr. Reportedly, they were told, "Take him away and kill him in your special way."<sup>148</sup> Whether the Sadrist actions were those of an angry mob or the action of a controlled militia is now largely irrelevant. This event provides the backdrop for future violent confrontations between the Sadr movement and the Coalition; strategic interactions that would increase the stature of Muqtada al-Sadr and the Sadr II movement.

In early summer 2003, Muqtada al-Sadr announced the formation of the Mahdi Army, his own militia to counter the American occupation.<sup>149</sup> The Mahdi

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<sup>146</sup> Cole, p. 15.

<sup>147</sup> Drew Brown. 2004. "Coalition Officials Shelved Plan to Arrest Al-Sadr." *Knight Ridder Tribune News Service* (8 April): 1.

<sup>148</sup> Babek Dehghanpisheh, Melinda Liu, and Rod Nordland. 2004. 'We Are Your Martyrs!'. *Newsweek* 143, no. 16 (Apr 19) : 36.

<sup>149</sup> Patrick Jackson. "Who are Iraq's Mahdi Army?," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, Aug 11 2004. Available from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3604393.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3604393.stm), [September 2004].

Army would confront Coalition forces throughout 2004. Having begun the conflict as a relatively unknown junior cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr continued to use violence as contention against the Coalition forces. While a senior U.S. commander described Muqtada al-Sadr as, “a poser, a little boy playing cleric”, al-Sadr continued to defy U.S. forces.<sup>150</sup> Figure 23 provides a timeline of these confrontations with U.S. forces.

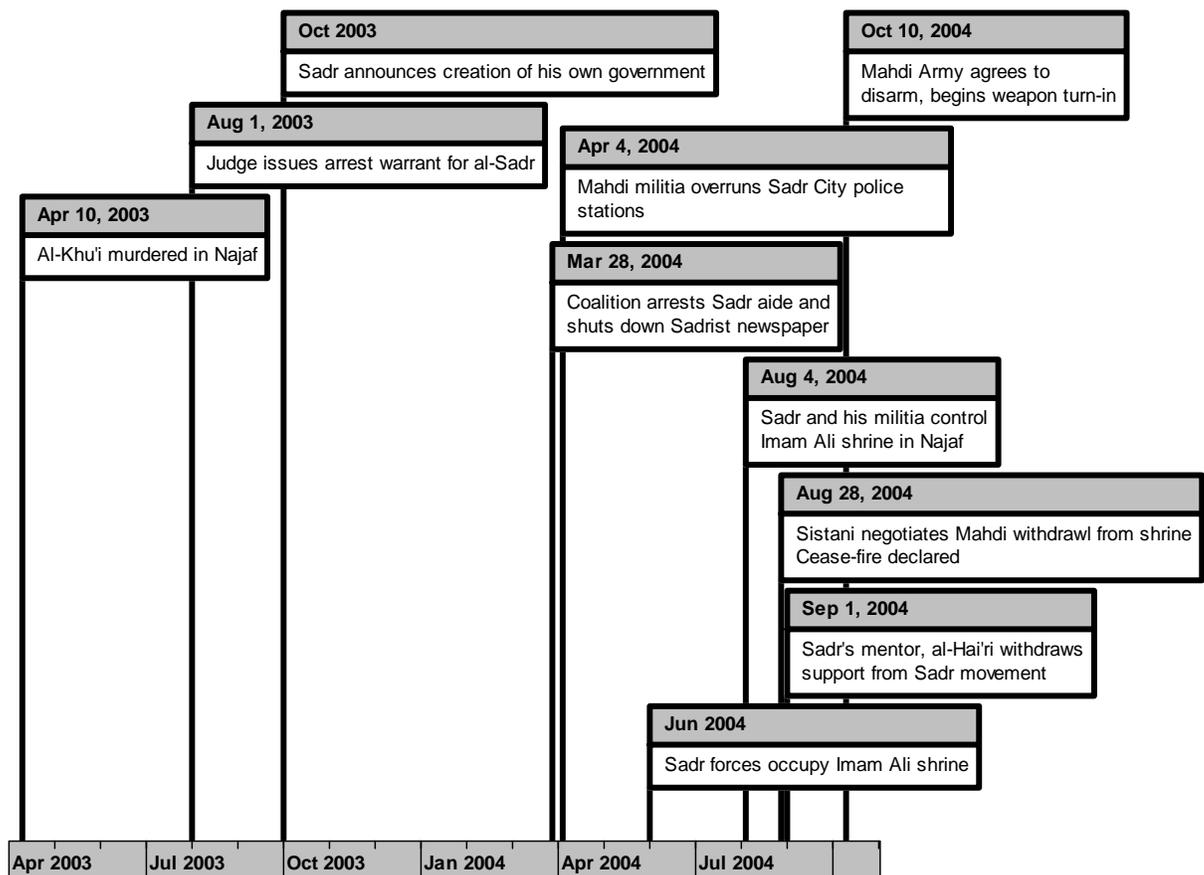


Figure 23. Timeline of Sadrist Collective Action, April 2003 – Nov 2004

The final confrontation with Coalition forces in August 2004 was by far the most deadly, in which Sadr forces took control of the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf. Ultimately, hundreds of Sadr supporters were killed during this standoff, which

<sup>150</sup> Thanassis Cambanis, Anne Barnard. “Sadr's Moves Suggest Threats Weren't Empty.” *Boston Globe* 2004. Apr 6.

ended with an agreement brokered by Sadr's rival, Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani. Following this agreement, Sadr agreed to disarm his militia.

While Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani does not support Sadr or his agenda, the Sadr Movement did potentially benefit from Sistani's non-violent contention against specific Coalition policies. In January 2004, Sistani issued a *fatwa* denouncing the Coalition Provisional Authority's plan for phase handover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government. Overnight hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in protest.<sup>151</sup> Unbelievably, the U.S. led Coalition was on the wrong end of the transition to democracy; the Iraqis demanded democracy and the Coalition's plan delayed it. It is likely that these demonstrations included segments of the Shi'a population that previously had not demonstrated with Sadr against the Coalition, potentially increasing oppositional consciousness within a new segment of the Shi'a population.

## **B. EVALUATING THE SADR II MOVEMENT**

Muqtada al-Sadr and the Sadr II Movement are competing in an organizational fight for leadership within the Iraqi Shi'a community.<sup>152</sup> The Sadrist mobilization structures, frames, and repertoires of action center on increasing the stature of Muqtada al-Sadr within the Iraqi Shi'a population. How successful has the Sadr Movement been in gaining ground on the traditional Shi'a leadership? In polling conducted by the Oxford Research International in February 2004, only 1.5% of Iraqis surveyed identified Muqtada al-Sadr as the leader they most trusted. By June 2004, Sadr was identified as most trusted by 7.4% of those surveyed. In comparison, Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani received 10% support from those surveyed. While the numbers are not enormous, Sadr's

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<sup>151</sup> Rod Nordland, Babak Dehghanpisheh. 2005. "What Sistani Wants." *Newsweek* 145, no. 7 (14 February): 20. See also Diamond, Larry. 2004. "What Went Wrong in Iraq;" *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 5 (September/October) : 34.

<sup>152</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches," located in *Inside Terrorist Organizations* ed. by David Rapport, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pg. 26.

rise from unknown to a significant opposition leader was meteoric. This increase in stature may have caused Sadr to overreach in August 2004.

Sistani's diffusing of the Najaf standoff in August 2004 was seen as an enormous victory for the apolitical Sistani and a great defeat for Muqtada al-Sadr. While the Najaf defeat and the success of the January 2005 elections did not enhance Sadr's status, it is important to note that Sadr represents a unique political space within Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr is the only public figure who has consistently opposed the Coalition. All of the Sadr Movement's mobilization structures remain in place; Sadr is positioned to reinitiate his frames and repertoires if the new Iraqi government falters.

Demonstrations in Iraq organized by the Sadr Movement reiterate Sadr's staying power. In April 2005, tens of thousands of Shi'a protestors marked the anniversary of Baghdad's fall by marching in the streets against the U.S. led occupation.<sup>153</sup> The use of mosques as a core mobilization structure will serve as a continued hub to preach Sadr's message to the Shi'a population. The recent demonstrations by the Sadr Movement reemphasize the significance of his fight for leadership within the Shi'a community. The Sadrist frames and actions, while sometimes directed at U.S. forces and the Coalition, reinforce Sadr's fight for Shi'a community leadership.

In summary, the Sadr II Movement seized the opportunity to mobilize support within the Shi'a community. Muqtada al-Sadr led the movement to fill a vacuum created by the fall of the Hussein regime and unfilled by the Coalition. Leveraging these mobilization structures, the Sadr II Movement used collective action against the Coalition as a frame within the organizational struggle being waged against other Shi'a leaders. In doing so, Muqtada al-Sadr attempted to distinguish himself from the apolitical Grand Ayatullah al-Sistani and other Shi'a leaders. Sadr's early success in filling uncontested physical and information space within Shi'a areas of Iraq, likely let the Sadr II Movement to overreach in its attempt to occupy the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf.

<sup>153</sup> Antonio Castaneda. 2005. "Sadr Supporters Demand U.S. Pull Out from Iraq." *Washington Post*, (9 April).

Similar to the mobilization opportunities afforded the Sadr II Movement, the Sunni-based opposition benefited from the emergence of uncontested physical and information space. As both the Shi'a and Sunni opposition benefited from initial Coalition policies and tactics, the two movements vary greatly in terms of vision for a future Iraq. The Sadr II Movement has espoused a vision for a Shi'a led theocracy, while the Sunni-based opposition has no unifying vision or message. This critical distinction acts as a self-limiter on the future possibility of a unified opposition.

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## **V. ANALYSIS OF SUNNI-BASED OPPOSITION IN IRAQ**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The Coalition characterization of the opposition in Iraq has evolved slowly over the life of the conflict. Originally, U.S. senior leaders and military officials identified the opposition as dead-enders or foreign terrorists. As the outline of the opposition became somewhat clearer, this characterization began to evolve. Today, the opposition is generalized into three groups: Sunni, Shi'a militias in the form of the Sadr II movement, and foreign terrorists. While this generalization is not perfect, it is the characterization that I will use to examine Iraqi opposition to U.S. forces, specifically focusing on the creation and growth of forces in Sunni areas opposing the Coalition in Iraq. Using social movement theory<sup>154</sup> as a framework for analysis, I will examine opposition groups in the context of political opportunity, organization, and the framing used to mobilize support. Analysis of the opposition will focus on the Sunni-based insurgents, examining their growth since the fall of Saddam Hussein, as well as draw conclusions on current trends the new Iraqi government, Iraqi Security forces, and Coalition forces are capitalizing upon to weaken the Sunni-based opposition.

### **B. SUNNI OPPOSITION GROUPS**

To identify Iraqi indigenous groups as Sunni is a gross mischaracterization. A better description would be either opposition groups operating in traditionally Sunni areas, or groups representing Iraqis who are no longer in power. The challenge in defining these groups is the complexity of the society and the mix of tribal, religious, and Ba'athist impact on the Iraqi population.

After the close of major combat operations in 2003, the United States and the Interim Iraqi government regarded Iraqi insurgents primarily as disaffected

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<sup>154</sup> For a discussion of social movement theory applied to Islamic groups, see Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2004. *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

former Ba'athists. Jim Kuvalcaba, a Tufts University military scholar, offers a more generalized characterization of the former regime elements as "Preservationists [who] employ asymmetric means to attack selected targets to discredit the government and cause disenfranchisement among the population."<sup>155</sup> Indeed, a list of most wanted in Iraq, released in February 2005, is largely made up of former regime officials, indicating that both authority figures view many Ba'athist groups as problematic at best.

It is clear, however, that Ba'athist groups comprised of former regime officials do not constitute the full extent of Sunni-based opposition to US presence in Iraq and the emerging Iraqi government. Other groups that are ideologically closer to Zarqawi and Al-Qaeda are also involved, such as Ansar al-Sunah. Such groups have actively opposed US and interim Iraqi government actions in Iraq, from direct violence against US and Iraqi government personnel and leading boycotts of the January 2005 national Iraqi elections.

Unfortunately, complexities of Iraqi society, such as overlapping social and power networks, confound straightforward analysis of Iraqi opposition groups. Specifically, Sunni-based opposition groups in Iraq are not easily distinguished, and information on specific group composition is scarce. As a result, I approach analysis of these various groups at a macro, aggregate level, using the rubric of social movement theory to inform the analysis. I contend that the anti-Coalition movement that has emerged within the predominantly Sunni territories offers a particularly illustrative case study, especially when considering uncontested political space, the resulting impacts on the growth of the opposition within Iraq, and the emergence of multiple sovereignties<sup>156</sup> in areas by-passed by the Coalition during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. This paper offers key highlights from the case study in the hopes of enhancing our understanding of the insurgency.

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<sup>155</sup> Jim Ruvalcaba. *Understanding Iraq's Insurgency*. 2004. Available from [http://fletcher.tufts.edu/al\\_nakhlah/2004pdf/jimruvalcaba.pdf](http://fletcher.tufts.edu/al_nakhlah/2004pdf/jimruvalcaba.pdf), [September 2004], p.9.

<sup>156</sup> Sidney Tarrow. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press. 1998.

## **1. Political Opportunity for Sunni-based Groups**

Political opportunity available to the Sunni-based opposition after the fall of the Hussein regime, came in three forms: 1) an imperfect end to the conflict, 2) insurgent information advantage, and 3) decreasing Coalition presence in Sunni areas.

The war in Iraq ended with a whimper. Military historian John Keegan describes the phenomenon of an Iraqi Army that in some areas of the country disappeared.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, the conflict did not end with an unconditional surrender by political or military leaders. The leadership evaporated, leaving the Coalition to declare victory by unseating the regime but without permanently removing the previous regime. There was little for the Coalition to do to solve this problem. Saddam Hussein, his sons, and the other leaders of Iraq ran from the Coalition, choosing to hide. During this period, Saddam Hussein focused on survival; seeking to evade capture by Coalition forces. As Saddam Hussein hid, others within the former regime seized this chaotic period as an opportunity to mobilize. In short, while the United States focused on eliminating the last vestiges of Hussein's regime during the early months of occupation, emerging Sunni leaders seized upon this lack of effective governance to organize and mobilize their constituencies. Thus, the imperfect end to the conflict created an opportunity for Sunni-based anti-Coalition groups to become effective agitators in the weeks following cessation of major hostilities.

Moreover, while the opposition was mobilizing in the underground, the United States' immediate focus following the conflict was on reducing troop strength and finding anticipated weapons of mass destruction. As violence against the Coalition increased, senior leaders placed the blame on dead-enders and foreign terrorists.

Further, the opposition created additional opportunity through the use of violence. As violence against Coalition forces increased, areas within the

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<sup>157</sup> Keegan, John. 2004. *The Iraq War*. New York: A.A. Knopf, p. 3.

country became Coalition “no-go zones.”<sup>158</sup> These no-go zones included Samara, Ramadi, and most famously, Fallujah. As Coalition forces drew back from these areas, the contest for the support of the population dramatically shifted to the opposition. According to Bruce Hoffman, “It is a truism of counterinsurgency that a population will give its allegiance to the side that will best protect it.”<sup>159</sup> These uncontested spaces enabled the opposition to dominate both the physical and information space, in effect avoiding the underground. Traditionally, an insurgency is a contest for the population. During extended periods in 2004, the opposition was able to win the contest unopposed. The vacuum created in these areas gave the opposition freedom of movement and safe haven, enabling mobilization above ground.

## **2. Opposition Mobilizing Structures**

Primary mobilization structures for the opposition in Sunni-based areas included previous regime actions, Coalition policies, and an unchallenged information space.

In a perverse sense, the discriminatory and manipulative policies of the Hussein regime provided ready social networks alienated from the emerging power structure in Iraq. Throughout his reign Saddam Hussein retained an iron grip on Iraq through the skillful manipulation of the diversity and makeup of the Iraqi population. This manipulation resulted in creating layers of trust within the government through nepotism, tribal ties, and careful vetting of loyalty.<sup>160</sup> Saddam Hussein selected those closest to him by relying on family, tribal, and Ba’ath Party affiliations. This close knit group largely made up the “deck of cards” wanted by the Coalition. After the fall of Baghdad, this group dispersed and was hunted by the Coalition. The former regime leadership was forced into

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<sup>158</sup> Stannard, pg. 1.

<sup>159</sup> Bruce Hoffman. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*. June 2004. Internet on-line. Available from <[http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2005/RAND\\_OP127.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf)>. [Nov, 2004], p. 15.

<sup>160</sup> Phebe Marr. 2003. “Iraq ‘The Day After’: Internal Dynamics in Post-Saddam Iraq.” *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 1 (Winter): 12.

the underworld, likely relying on the same trusted network of family and tribal connections for support. This designed hierarchy of “haves” in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, became outsiders which forced this former hierarchy to band together or lose all of its previous influence.

As Saddam Hussein went into hiding, the Coalition formulated its approach for post-conflict governance. It is insufficient at this point to label the Coalition Provisional Authority policies of de-Ba’athification and disbanding of the Iraqi Army as the cause of the insurgency.<sup>161</sup> Although these policies likely contributed recruits as foot soldiers, it is a certainty that the current suspected leaders of the Sunni groups would have been unwelcome in any future Iraqi society. Whereas former Ba’athist leaders would be unwelcome, a role for the remnants of the Iraqi Army is less clear. Disbanding of the Iraqi Army likely impacted the growth of the insurgency in two potential ways: 1. Increased the number of unemployed in a country with no industry; and 2. Limited the potential reuse of Army soldiers in other capacities supporting the Coalition. Despite the fact that large segments of the Iraqi Army did dissolve in the face of the Coalition invasion, some Coalition units, such as the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, were moderately successful in recruiting former soldiers in the area around Mosul.<sup>162</sup> This practice ended with the CPA order #2, which officially disbanded the former Iraqi Army.

While the connection between these policies and the growth of the insurgency cannot be empirically linked, the lack of opportunity for unemployed Iraqis has created a market for anti-Coalition activities. The 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Commander, MG Raymond Odierno, reported that payment for attacks on Coalition was increasing, “When we first got here (Oct 2003), we believed it was about \$100 to conduct an attack against coalition forces, and \$500 if you’re successful. We now (Mar 2004) believe it’s somewhere between \$1000 and

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<sup>161</sup> James Fallows. 2004. “Blind into Baghdad.” *The Atlantic Monthly* 293, no. 1 (Jan/Feb): 52.

<sup>162</sup> Mary Sheridan. “For Help in Rebuilding Mosul, U.S. Turns to Its Former Foes; 40 Retired Iraqi Generals Enlisted In Northern City.” *Washington Post* 2003. Apr 25.

\$2000 if you conduct an attack, and \$3000 to \$5000 if you're successful."<sup>163</sup> This developing market has enabled the opposition groups to mobilize actions against the Coalition leveraging funds rather than recruits. It is important to note, however, that the rising costs potentially indicate that security measures and the establishment of the interim Iraqi government are resulting in an improved security posture within Iraq.

Another mobilization opportunity for the opposition emerged in unchallenged information spaces. As discussed previously, the Coalition inadvertently provided political opportunity to the Sunni-based insurgent groups in areas that became no-go zones for the Coalition. In the aftermath of the U.S.-led re-capturing of Fallujah, the totality of insurgent control of the city and associated information space became apparent. This enabled the creation of an insurgent infrastructure within the city. The figure below is an extract from an after-action report on the insurgent presence at the time of the U.S operation to reclaim Fallujah.

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<sup>163</sup> Bruce Hoffman. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*. June 2004. Available from [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2005/RAND\\_OP127.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2005/RAND_OP127.pdf), p. 12.

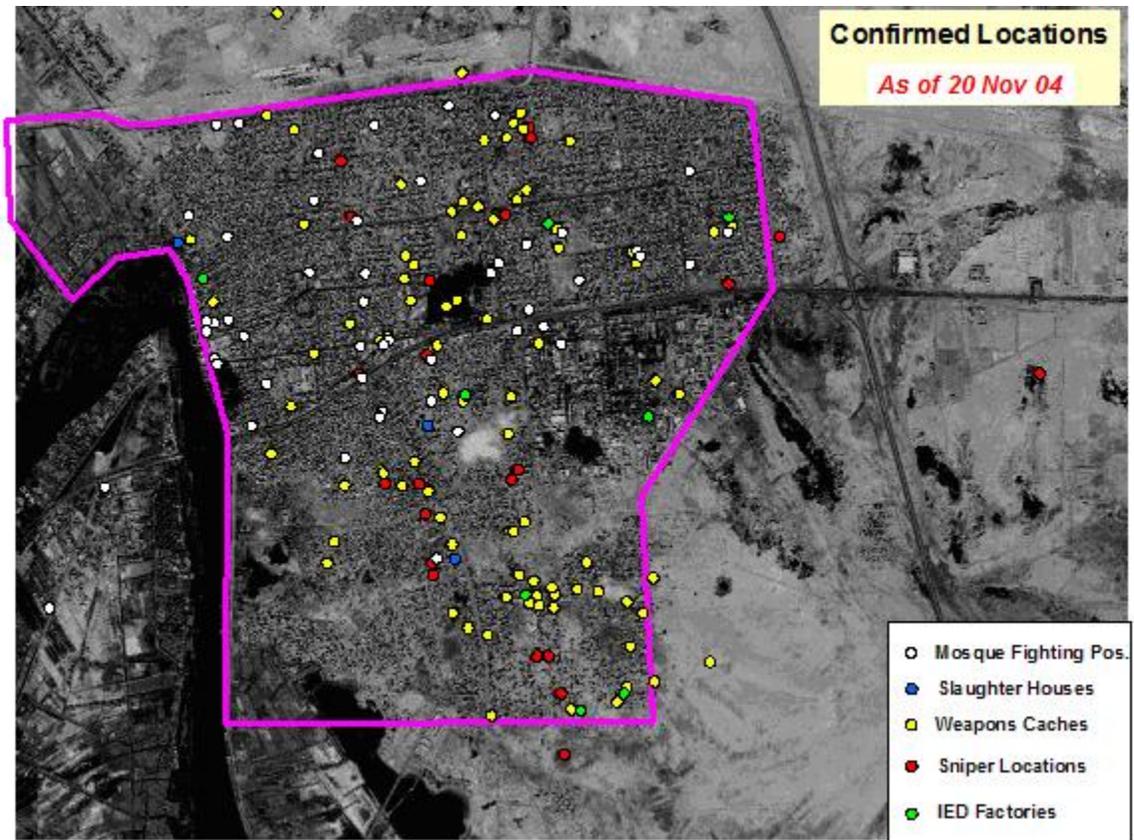


Figure 24. Opposition controlled positions in Fallujah prior to U.S. action, Nov 2004<sup>164</sup>

Though lacking direct evidence to determine which facilities were used to mobilize in terms of recruitment, it is clear that mosques (60 of 100 in Fallujah)<sup>165</sup> were used as a point for conducting violent actions against the U.S.-led Coalition, the interim Iraqi government, and the Iraqi population. The level of control as shown in Figure 24 and the resulting impact of such a density of movement sites are described in research by Charles Tilly. In his research on the importance of space and place in mobilizing collective action, he states:

High proximity fixed connections generate substantial local knowledge as well as extensive interplay between contentious repertoires and routine noncontentious social interaction.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>164</sup> IMEF & MNC-I Effects Exploitation Team Briefing 20 Nov 2004, *Telling the Fallujah Story to the World, Third Try*. Email communication.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, slide 2.

<sup>166</sup> Charles Tilly, 2003. "Contention over Space and Place," *Mobilization* 8(2): 221-225.

In this case, Fallujah is the extreme example of groups' total domination of the physical and information space. There has been no battle of ideas between the group and the government. Thus, in certain areas of Iraq, the Sunni-based opposition groups have become the *de facto* government.

In contrast to the case of Fallujah, other areas in the country, such as Mosul, were secured by Coalition forces since the fall of the Hussein regime. Areas, such as Mosul, have had much lower rates of violent attacks and as of early April 2005 Iraqi security forces prepared to assume primacy in providing security in the city.<sup>167</sup> Reasons attributed to this drastically improved situation in Mosul, include:

The military attributes the decline to several factors, including Iraqis' increased willingness to provide information about insurgents and the growing presence of the new Iraqi security forces throughout the country. But the main reason, military officials said, is a grinding counterinsurgency operation -- now in its 20th month...It is a campaign of endless repetition: platoons of American troops patrolling Iraqi streets on foot or in armored vehicles. Its inherent monotony is punctuated by moments of extreme violence.<sup>168</sup>

In contrast to the "no-go zone" of Fallujah, Mosul was space contested by the Coalition since April 2003. The tireless efforts of the units stationed there has resulted in increased trust, effectively countering opposition actions in that city.

#### **4. Frames and Repertoires of Action**

Sunni-based opposition groups also leveraged framing processes and violent repertoires of action. Given the disparate nature of the groups involved in the Sunni-based insurgency, their frames and framing processes are not uniform and no clear cut ideology exists. What do exist are common frames, consisting of anti-Coalition, anti-Iraqi government, and anti-collaboration messages and actions.

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<sup>167</sup> Steve Fainaru, "In Mosul, a Battle 'Beyond Ruthless;'" *Washington Post*, April 13, 2005, pg. 1.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

The master frame of the opposition forces has been anti-Coalition. All other frames and actions amplify the anti-Coalition frame, where blame is laid on the Coalition for the change in status of the Sunni areas. Iraq is replete with examples of anti-Coalition framing, such as this statement from the Islamic Army of Iraq:

When the infidel Americans and their allies became weak and the burden [of Iraq] became unbearable, they decided to rescue their remaining dignity by using so-called democracy in order to rule over us using our own people. It is well-known that the meaning of democracy is 'rule of the people', but their decisions are not true to this infidel concept. Moreover, they impose whatever they like in the name of democracy, this democracy that gives cover to occupation and tyranny.<sup>169</sup>

Likewise other groups echo the anti-Coalition refrain. Ansar al-Sunnah provides another example of the anti-coalition framing that has occurred within the Sunni opposition forces. Having announced its formation in September 2003 as a mixture of foreign jihadists, former members of Ansar al-Islam (the Northern Iraq, Kurdish based group that harbored Zarqawi), and Iraqi Sunnis, the group announced that it was "A detachment of mujahadeen, ulema, and political and military experts, who are seasoned in Islamic conflict against atheists."<sup>170</sup> Ansar al-Sunnah produces a bridging of anti-Coalition messages with justification for these actions through a duty of jihad. Regardless of the group, each has used violence to reinforce their words.

Anti-coalition framing has been supported with indiscriminate violence against Coalition forces within Iraq. The sheer number of anti-Coalition attacks has been staggering. Since April 2004, there have been more than 1500 attacks on Coalition forces per month. Although these attacks were not exclusively Sunni-based, these groups are credited with over 90% of the attacks.<sup>171</sup> Sunni-

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<sup>169</sup> Global Terror Alert, 2005. *The Islamic Army in Iraq on the Upcoming Elections*, January 13, 2005, available from <http://www.globalterroralert.com/pdf/0105/islamicarmy0105-2.pdf>, [March 2005].

<sup>170</sup> Jane's Intelligence Digest, 2005. "Iraq: the threat of Ansar al-Sunnah." *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, 7 January 2005.

<sup>171</sup> Bruce Hoffman. 2004. "Plan of Attack." *The Atlantic Monthly* 294, no. 1 (Jul/Aug) : 42.

based groups have also used specific, targeted attacks against Coalition members to attempt to fracture the Coalition. Attacks on Coalition intelligence services and kidnappings serve as examples of this class of attack.

Attacks on Coalition intelligence services illustrate the sophistication and tactical abilities of the opposition. In separate attacks, Ansar al-Sunnah claimed responsibility for the ambush and killing of Coalition intelligence forces. The first in January 2004 killed eight Canadian and British “intelligence men.”<sup>172</sup> Ansar al-Sunnah produced a videotape of the attack. While the Coalition has not acknowledged this attack, or the identities of the victims, the potential systematic targeting of the Coalition intelligence apparatus represents a next step in opposition tactics. In a separate attack in November 2004, seven Spanish intelligence officers were killed in an ambush near Baghdad.<sup>173</sup>

Using a tactic made famous by the Zarqawi kidnapping and execution of Nicholas Berg<sup>174</sup>, Sunni-based groups have also used kidnappings as a repertoire of violent action. These kidnappings have targeted foreign contractors, media, non-governmental organizations, as well as Iraqi and Kurdish leaders. Foreign countries targeted have included: South Korea, Nepal, Italy, France, Russia, China, Lebanon, Italy, Phillipines, Pakistan, Egypt, Bulgaria, Britain, and of course, the United States. In some of the cases those kidnapped have been executed; in others, the country has negotiated a release. Groups that have claimed responsibility for kidnappings include: Ansar al-Sunnah, Islamic Anger Brigades, and the Assadullah Brigades.<sup>175</sup> These groups have not limited their attacks to the Coalition.

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<sup>172</sup> Jane's Intelligence Digest, 2005. “Iraq: the threat of Ansar al-Sunnah.” *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, January 7, 2005.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> CameraIraq.com. *Nicholas Berg Beheading*: May 8, 2004. May 2004. Internet on-line. Available from <[http://www.camerairaq.com/2004/05/nick\\_berg\\_video.html](http://www.camerairaq.com/2004/05/nick_berg_video.html)>. [Mar, 2005].

<sup>175</sup> Samir Haddad and Mazin Ghazi, 2004. “An inventory of Iraqi resistance groups.” *Al Zawra* (Baghdad), 19 September 2004. FBIS translation.

The Sunni-based groups extended their venom to include the Iraqi government, principally the nascent Iraqi security forces. As Iraqi Security forces have grown, the Iraqi opposition has systematically targeted these emerging forces. The most gruesome of these attacks occurred in late October 2004, when 49 new Iraqi Army recruits were murdered after departing an Iraqi training base on leave. The attack and its impact were immediately felt within the Coalition and the Iraqi government. Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi responded by saying, "I think there was major negligence by the multinational forces. It was a way to damage Iraq and the Iraqi people."<sup>176</sup> While this attack was among the most gruesome, it was not an isolated incident. Iraqi security forces have also been kidnapped and reports of infiltration of the Iraqi Army by the insurgents have also been widely reported.<sup>177</sup>

Perhaps the most successful tactic to implement anti-coalition and anti-government frames has been suicide bombings. These groups have leveraged suicide bombings as a critical repertoire of action against the Coalition and the Iraqi population. Suicide bombings have produced extremely devastating attacks. This terror tactic has become more prevalent in Iraq, peaking at 133 in November 2004.<sup>178</sup> Major General John DeFreitas III, Multi-National Forces-Iraq Director of Intelligence, underscores the impact of these attacks, "We see the suicide car bomb as the insurgents' precision guided weapon. No other weapon is so efficient at terrorizing and intimidating the population."<sup>179</sup> Iraqi security force recruits have been particularly vulnerable to this class of attack. A suicide attacker, posing as another recruit, walks into a crowd in front of a recruiting station and detonates his explosives; killing or maiming the gathered crowd.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Edward Wong, 2004. "Allawi Blames 'Negligence by U.S.-led Force for Ambush Deaths of 49 Iraqi Soldiers," *New York Times*, 27 October 2004, 10.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Rod Nordland, Christopher Dickey. 2005. "Unmasking the Insurgents." *Newsweek* 145, no. 6 (7 February): 20.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Steve Fainaru. 2005. "Blast at Iraqi Recruiting Center Kills 21 as Insurgency Mounts; 168 People Have Died in Post-Election Violence, Officials Say." *The Washington Post*, A.20.

Whereas targeting of Iraqi security forces has been significant, the opposition's attacks on the Iraqi economy may have the longest term effect. Sunni-based groups have been very successful in the targeting of the Iraqi economy, besieging the oil industry with acts of sabotage. The U.S. Director of Reconstruction for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, David Taylor, said in November 2004, "The minister of oil is very concerned about...the security of people repairing oil lines and intimidating truck drivers."<sup>181</sup> The results of these attacks speak for themselves. A recent report by the Brookings Institute shows that Iraqi oil revenues have declined to \$1.34B in February 2005 from a high of \$1.99B in October 2004.<sup>182</sup> In addition to these direct attacks on the Iraqi security forces and the Iraqi economy, the other primary opposition frame extends to Iraqi citizens considering employment or support to the Iraqi government.

The anti-collaboration frame has directly targeted the Iraqi populace, branding supporters of the government or employees of the government as "collaborators." Anyone working with the Coalition is potentially targeted. One example is Iraqi translators working for the Coalition, by late October 2004, some 45 assisting the U.S. military had been killed in Baghdad alone.<sup>183</sup>

Sunni-based groups have created a very effective anti-collaboration frame. Supported closely with repertoires of violence, this frame has resonated within the Iraqi population. Immediately following the U.S.-led liberation of Fallujah, Lt Gen Lance Smith, Deputy Commander of U.S. Central Command said, "I will tell you that the intimidation campaign that is ongoing is very effective and we see it permeates many levels of the Iraqi government and the Iraqi security forces."<sup>184</sup> The opposition has translated these negative frames into

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<sup>181</sup> Esther Schrader and Mark Mazzetti. "The Conflict in Iraq; Chaos in Iraq Imperils Voting; Security in Some Areas Has Deteriorated, U.S. officials say, stalling efforts to rebuild and threatening the elections planned for January." *Los Angeles Times*, 20 November 2004.

<sup>182</sup> O'Hanlon.

<sup>183</sup> Rod Nordland, 2004. "No Place is Safe." *Newsweek* 144, no. 14 (October): 30.

<sup>184</sup> Schrader and Mazzetti.

violent actions or repertoires against the Coalition, the interim Iraqi government, and the Iraqi population.

To reinforce this anti-collaboration frame, the opposition also successfully used psychological operations as part of their operations, distributing leaflets in areas of the country that may come under attack. Examples of this occurred post-Fallujah (Nov. 2004) when insurgents stepped up attacks in Baghdad. Prior to the operations, leaflets were distributed in Baghdad neighborhoods urging government workers to stay home to “avoid putting their lives in danger.”<sup>185</sup>

In another anti-collaboration repertoire, Newsweek has reported that in neighborhoods across Baghdad (Feb 2005), “renunciation centers”<sup>186</sup> were established. At these locations, Iraqis accused of cooperating with the Coalition can avoid death by publicly announcing their opposition to the Coalition. In some cases these renunciations are done in person, in other cases the renunciation must be accomplished in writing.

## **5. Conclusions**

What has emerged in Iraq is an unlikely, unholy alliance of disparate groups and individuals that have coalesced into an anti-Coalition, anti-Iraqi government movement. According to Bruce Hoffman, the current state of opposition in Iraq is as follows:

The Iraqi insurgency has no center of gravity. Secular Ba’athists and other (Former Regime Elements) are cooperating with domestic and foreign religious extremists...The Iraqi insurgency today appears to have no clear leader (or leadership), no ambition to seize and actually hold territory, no unifying ideology, and most importantly, no identifiable organization.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Patrick McDonnell, Mark Mazzetti , and Alissa J. Rubin. “The Conflict in Iraq; Troops Push Deeper Into Fallouja; The U.S.- Iraqi force takes control of key buildings, including the City Hall complex. Military leaders say resistance is lighter than expected.” *Los Angeles Times* 10 November 2004.

<sup>186</sup> Rod Nordland, Christopher Dickey. 2005. “Unmasking the Insurgents.” *Newsweek* 145, no. 6 (Feb 7): 20.

<sup>187</sup> Bruce Hoffman. 2004. “Plan of Attack.” *The Atlantic Monthly* 294, no. 1 (Jul/Aug): 42.

This movement continued to mobilize support throughout 2004. While the success of the Iraqi elections within Shi'a areas provided optimism, potential exists that the lack of Sunni participation will increase the oppositional consciousness within Sunni areas. The challenge for the emerging Iraqi government will be to somehow expand the inclusiveness of the new government to include the disenfranchised populous within these areas, while also mitigating the influence of foreign elements and former Ba'athist leaders.

Throughout the post-conflict period, the Iraqi population's views of the Coalition have also deteriorated. Table 7 shows the results of polls conducted by the Coalition Provisional Authority in January and May 2004.

How much confidence do you have in the Coalition to improve the situation in Iraq?		
	January 2004	May 2004
Great Deal	11.6%	1.5%
Fair Amount	16.7%	8.2%
Not Very Much	13.7%	6.1%
None at all	53.3%	80.6%

Table 7. Iraqi population's view of the Coalition<sup>188</sup>

Similarly, an International Republican Institute poll completed in October 2004 asked Iraqis, "Thinking about the difficult situation in Iraq currently, whether in terms of security, the economy, or living conditions, who in your view is most to blame?"<sup>189</sup> A full third (33.4%) blamed the multinational forces, 32% foreign terrorists, 8% the armed supporters of the former regime, and 12%, a combination of the three.

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<sup>188</sup> Frederick Barton and Bathsheba Crocker, *Progress or Peril? Measuring Iraq's Reconstruction*, September 2004. Available from [http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409\\_progressperil.pdf](http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/0409_progressperil.pdf), [March 2005], p. 27.

<sup>189</sup> O'Hanlon, M.

Though certainly not conclusive, the opposition's attempts to blame the Coalition appear to be resonating with the population. Although these numbers are not encouraging, the situation is not completely dire. Understanding and defusing the opposition's mobilization structures and countering the oppositional frames can weaken this amorphous anti-Coalition, anti-Iraqi opposition.

Additionally, polling conducted on behalf of the Department of State during the December 2004 to March 2005 timeframe identified the population's confidence in the violent opposition. The Figure below summarizes the findings.

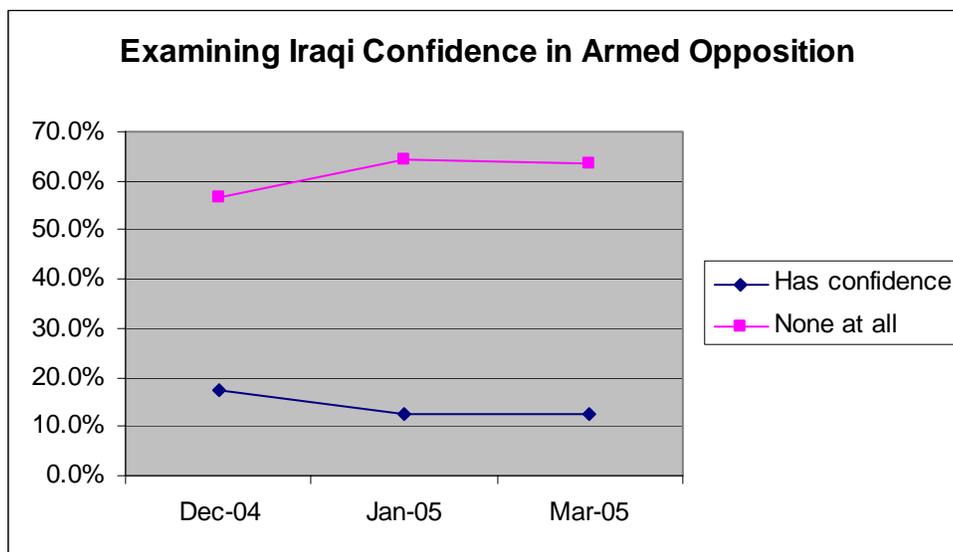


Figure 25. Iraqi Confidence in the Opposition

According to these polls, the opposition has been able to sustain some confidence in a segment of the population, but the month of the Iraqi elections showed a significant deterioration of support.

### C. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The Iraqi elections created enormous opportunities for the new Iraqi government to weaken support for the Sunni-based opposition. While the low voter turnout within Sunni areas is a large concern, the recent steps taken by the new government to include Sunni leaders is a positive step for legitimacy in the eyes of the Sunni population. Also, the initial announcements made by new Iraqi

leaders signal intent to weaken the mobilization structures and frames of the opposition.

To date, the frames used by the Sunni-based opposition have been anti-Coalition and anti-collaboration, the opposition has not offered a positive agenda or a vision for Iraq. In contrast, the new Iraqi government has established a desire for inclusion and reinforcement of an Iraqi nationalism frame. This counterframing<sup>190</sup> potentially allows the new government to weaken the opposition by offering Iraqi nationalism and a vision for a new Iraq as an effective positive counter to the negative agenda of the opposition.

In his first remarks about the opposition, Iraq's new President, Jalal Tabani, discussed the potential of a broad amnesty program. Tabani distinguished foreign elements (such as Zarqawi) and Iraqi opposition, "It is essential that we separate those who came from outside the country, like all those organizations affiliated with al Qaeda, from Iraqis. We must seek to win over the Iraqis to the democratic process going on in the country."<sup>191</sup> The attempts at inclusion will be challenging, but if teamed successfully with an increased effort to promote Iraqi nationalism; the opposition may be forced deeper into the underground.

To promote nationalism and attack the oppositions use of terror tactics, one outlet chosen by the Iraqi government is a novel one: reality TV. The new show "Terrorism in the Hands of Justice" has created a large following on the Iraqi state-owned television network. During each show, captured opposition confess to attacks on the Iraqi people. The show is controversial due to the potential for coerced confessions, yet the effort by the Iraqi government to label the opposition as mercenaries and anti-Iraqi does draw a response. One Baghdad resident responded to the show, "For the first time, we saw those who claim to be jihadists as simple \$50 murders who would do everything in the name

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<sup>190</sup> Robert Benford, and David A. Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, 611.

<sup>191</sup> Ellen Knickmeyer. "Talabani Offers Amnesty to Insurgents; New Iraqi President Reaches Out to Sunnis, Names Jafari as Prime Minister." *The Washington Post*, 8 April 2005.

of Islam. Our religion is too lofty, noble, and humane to have such thugs and killers.”<sup>192</sup> This is certainly not the entire answer,, but these anecdotes show intent by the emerging Iraqi government to counter the opposition’s message and mobilization structures.

The new Iraqi government’s efforts to create a renewed sense of Iraqi nationalism will be difficult, but there are signs that opportunity exists for the new government. In the same polls that showed a declining trust in Coalition forces, the Iraqi people have demonstrated exceedingly high confidence in their new Iraqi Army and police forces. In both cases, 74% of Iraqis surveyed stated that they had either a great deal or quite a lot of trust for these new Iraqi security organizations.<sup>193</sup> If the government can successfully include increasing numbers of the Sunni minority, this will potentially drive the opposition further into the underground. These actions combined with previous Coalition and Iraqi security force actions to limit safe havens for the opposition limits the opposition’s space to mobilize. The deeper into the underground the opposition descends, the new government can contest both the physical and information space throughout the country.

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<sup>192</sup> Caryle Murphy and Khalid Saffar. “Actors in the Insurgency Are Reluctant TV Stars; Terror Suspects Grilled, Mocked on Hit Iraqi Show.” *The Washington Post*, 5 April 2005.

<sup>193</sup> Barton.

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## **VI. CONCLUSIONS**

The decision to effect regime change in Iraq was a historic turning point in U.S. military action. This first attempt to implement the Bush Doctrine of preemption will have lasting impacts on grand strategy for the nation and military tactics for the U.S. military. Identifying the right lessons from this conflict is essential. The United States-led Coalition in Iraq has sacrificed troops and treasure to displace Saddam Hussein with the intent to install a peaceful, democratic government. Having won the military operations phase so convincingly, challenges in the post-conflict phase have unexpectedly placed enormous strain on the military and left victory in doubt. This paper argues that the Coalition faced unanticipated challenges and violence in Iraq for three related reasons: First, an inability to provide security for the Iraqi population; second, the rapid collapse in Iraqi confidence in the Coalition; and finally, the availability of uncontested physical and information space for opposition mobilization. These three key developments occurred due to a mismatch between Coalition policies and tactics implemented in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein.

### **A. IMPLICATIONS FOR IRAQ**

I use two analytical approaches to examine post-conflict Iraq. The first is an examination of Coalition policies and tactics using criteria for fostering revolt from a first-hand authority on Arab rebellion, T.E. Lawrence. Using Lawrence's framework, I conclude:

- Pre-conflict, U.S. military leaders planned on leveraging Iraqi military personnel in post-conflict Iraq, but the combined impact of the lack of resources to pay the Iraqi military and the Coalition decision to disband the Iraqi military left Coalition forces unable to satisfy Lawrence's "doctrine of acreage."
- Coalition military commanders responded to increasing violence with aggressive offensive military operations, further limiting security for the Iraqi population.

- A bifurcated chain of command for security created seams in Coalition security policy and tactics; these seams grew into unsecured areas of the country creating opportunities for opposition mobilization.
- Continued post-conflict emphasis on Weapons of Mass Destruction, mandated a significant percentage of intelligence resources focus solely on WMD; this placed tactical commanders at a significant information disadvantage to the opposition until tactical intelligence capabilities were constituted

The second analytical framework uses social movement theory to analyze the growth of the opposition in Iraq. Social movement theory examines how individuals and groups mobilize and sustain collective action against an existing power. In the case of Iraq, I examine the Sadr II Movement and the Sunni-based opposition and draw the following conclusions:

- As a result of initial Coalition policies and tactics, no-go zones emerged within portions of Iraq; this uncontested physical and information space fueled the growth of the opposition within Iraq.
- The Sadr II Movement's emergence in Iraq was part of an organizational struggle within the Shi'a community; one that continues today.
- Despite being weakened by his failed attempt to control key sites in Najaf in August 2004, Muqtada al-Sadr is the only named Iraqi opposition to the U.S.-led Coalition; given future political opportunity the Sadr II Movement remains a threat to a future Iraqi government.
- The only unifying messages for the Sunni-based opposition are anti-Coalition and anti-collaboration. The Sunni opposition have not presented a vision for a future, unoccupied Iraq.
- The different motivations and message from the Sunni and Shi'a opposition act as a self-limiter in the overall effectiveness of the opposition.
- Iraqi government efforts to establish a nationalistic frame are a positive counter-framing step to capitalize on potential support within the Iraqi population.

Is there a possible strategy for success in Iraq? Success or failure in Iraq will ultimately be determined by the Iraqi government. Regardless of the number

of Coalition Force offensive operations, the insurgency in Iraq will not be defeated based solely on military operations. The Iraqi government must create a unifying strategy centered on Iraqi nationalism. A prerequisite for implementing any strategy in Iraq will be the successful completion and approval of an Iraqi-drafted Constitution, followed by nationwide elections of a new Iraqi government. This breakthrough will provide an opportunity for the Iraqi government to distinguish itself from the Coalition and implement policies that could potentially weaken the insurgency. Having examined the views of the population and the growth of the insurgency, the author concludes:

- The Iraqi government should emphasize a master-frame of Iraqi nationalism, supported by a frame to remove *all* foreign presence from Iraq. The Iraqi government can request popular support to rid the nation of any violent, foreign opposition, while the government negotiates a drawn down of Coalition Forces.
- Following the election, the Iraqi government should assert itself as the first Iraqi government elected under an *Iraqi*-drafted Constitution and request immediate removal of some Coalition Forces with a graduated plan for removal of remaining foreign troops within 12-24 months.
  - This policy supports Iraqi and Coalition interests. Ultimately, the Iraqi government must separate itself from the Coalition to be respected by the population. The U.S.-led Coalition looks forward to a reduced presence in Iraq. This policy negates both the anti-Coalition and anti-collaboration frames from the violent opposition.
- The Iraqi government should independently negotiate an amnesty program with the Sunni-based opposition that is consistent with Iraqi culture and Islamic law.

- The government should build on the population's confidence in the emerging Iraqi Security and Police Forces, by emphasizing population security over offensive operations.

This strategy is reliant on popular support. Early removal of Coalition Forces places a greater onus on the still maturing Iraqi Security and Police Forces, but the presence of Coalition Forces is both a strength in the form of offensive operations and a negative in terms of opposition framing.

## **B. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE OCCUPATIONS**

Post-conflict Iraq provides a case study for regime change operations. Some of the lessons may be distasteful to learn, but understanding what went right and what went wrong is crucial for future post-conflict operations. Iraq is not an exact template for future, post-conflict operations, but some macro lessons can be highlighted. The Iraq experience suggests the following:

- The issue is not troop strength, it is control. It is overly simplistic to say that more troops were needed to satisfy the doctrine of acreage in Iraq. Future post-conflict operations should emphasize local control, using a combination of indigenous tribal, military, and police forces with U.S. and Coalition troops.
- Unity of command in post-conflict operations is a prerequisite. Unity of effort in all Coalition efforts is needed to successfully synchronize security, reconstruction, and governance tasks.
- Intelligence resources should not be dedicated to a single intelligence requirement, but rather tasked and controlled by local commanders and intelligence professionals.
- The first security priority in post-conflict should be popular security. They do not have to like us, but the population must be confident in our ability to protect them.

- Post-conflict funding must be front-loaded and readily available for tactical commanders. As MG Patreus emphasized in post-conflict Iraq, “money is our ammunition.” Not in large contracts, but in cash available to local commanders to meet initial needs. While some of these funds will likely incur some fraud and graft, this initial investment will return rewards ten fold in terms of addressing popular concerns.

Understanding the Iraqi conflict is a mandate for the nation. Our marines, soldiers, airmen and sailors have shown amazing bravery and dedication in carrying out the Iraqi mission. Future post-conflict planning must learn from the enormous shortfalls of the immediate post-conflict period in Iraq and match capabilities and resources to the challenged at hand.

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